DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 431 082 CE 078 733

AUTHOR	Batman, Kangan; Gadd, Nick; Lucas, Michele
TITLE	Farm Management and Leadership. Level 1. Level 2. Level 3. Support Materials for Agricultural Training.
INSTITUTION	National Languages and Literacy Inst., Melbourne (Australia).
SPONS AGENCY	Australian Dept. of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Canberra.
PUB DATE	1998-00-00
NOTE	171p.; For related documents, see CE 078 731-738. An initiative of the Victorian Farmers Federation and Primary Skills Victoria.
AVAILABLE FROM	Language Australia National Resource Centre, GPO Box 372F, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, Australia; e-mail: lanrc@la.ames.vic.edu.au
PUB TYPE	Guide - Classroom - Learner (051)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC07 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; *Agricultural Education; Agronomy; *Business Correspondence; *Communication Skills; Developed Nations; Distributive Education; Entrepreneurship; *Farm Management; Females; *Financial Aid Applicants; Financial Needs; Foreign Countries; Instructional Materials; Interpersonal Competence; Leadership; Learning Activities; Letters (Correspondence); *Marketing; Mission Statements; Postsecondary Education; Secondary Education; Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS	*Australia (Victoria)

ABSTRACT

This publication contains the three communication skills units of the three levels of Support Materials for Agricultural Training (SMAT) in farm management and leadership: Level 1 (starting), 2 (continuing), and 3 (completing). The units are designed to help the learner with the reading, writing, and spoken communication skills needed to deal with farm management. SMAT materials can be used by the individual, with a mentor, or in a group or class. An introduction describes how to use the materials, types of activities, and materials needed. Four types of activities are found in the communication unit: key word activities, reading activities, writing activities, and spoken communication activities. Model answers are provided. Topics covered in Level 1 are application forms, application forms--longer answers, interviews, scanning the classified ads, get to the point, farm management in a drought, and letters. Topics covered in Level 2 include the following: farm plans, farm mission statements, export grants, applications for funding, women and farm management, meetings, fruit industry tariffs, and formal letters. Topics covered in Level 3 are as follows: sustainable property plans, working with others, talking quality, marketing your produce, mission statements and objectives, and social issues. (YLB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 431 082

Farm Management and Leadership

Level 1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Support Materials for Agricultural Training

CE 078 733

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Acknowledgments

These units were developed as an initiative of the Victorian Farmers Federation and Primary Skills Victoria. They have been written and prepared by Kangan Batman TAFE.

Project Development Team:

Project Manager:	Barbara Goulborn
Writers:	Nick Gadd, Michele Lucas
Illustrations:	Tracey Lean
Graphics and Desktop Publishing:	Kelisha Dalton, Simon Colvey, Maryjeanne Watt, Betty Franklin
Editing:	Helen Yeates, Philip Kofoed, Angela Costi
Instructional design:	Elizabeth McInerney
Reviewers:	Dr. Barbara Johnson, McMillan Campus, University of Melbourne Lynne Fitzpatrick, Language Australia, 1997 Pam Lambert, B.A.C.E. Merna Curnow, industry representative Rob Tabener, Wimmera Rural Counselling Service
Series reviewer:	Malcolm Trainor, Instructor, Agricultural Education Centre, University of Ballarat

Project Steering Committee:

Clare Claydon:	Victorian Farmers Federation, 1997
Airlie Worral:	Victorian Farmers Federation
Lyn Hughes:	Primary Skills Victoria
John Nicholls:	Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs
Tony Audley:	United Diary Farmers of Victoria
Ken Stone:	Victorian Farmers Federation, industry representative
Colin Hunt:	Victorian Farmers Federation, industry representative
Margaret Brodie:	Victorian Farmers Federation, industry representative
Michael Kearney:	Victorian Farmers Federation, industry representative
Nickie Berrisford:	Grain Industry Training Network
Andrew Sullivan:	Agricultural Education Centre, University of Ballarat
Malcolm Trainor:	Agricultural Education Centre, University of Ballarat

Published and distributed by:
The Language Australia National Resource Centre
Language Australia
GPO Box 372F, Melbourne Victoria 3001
Telephone: (03) 9926 4779
Facsimile: (03) 9926 4780
Email: lanrc@la.ames.vic.edu.au

© 1998 Commonwealth of Australia.

Funded under the Workplace English Language and Literacy Programme by the Commonwealth through the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

Contents

Introduction 1

Where this fits 1
How to use these materials 2
Outcomes 2
How long should I spend? 2
Activities 2
What you need 3
Assessment 3

Application forms 4

Application forms–longer answers 16

1 Think and talk about what to write 18
2 Make a plan 19
3 Write a first draft 20
4 Check and fix the draft 21
5 Write a final version 30

Interviews 32

Before the interview 34
At the interview 35
At the end of the interview 37

Scanning the classified ads 39

Get to the point 45

Asking questions 47
Getting the answer you want 49

Farm management in a drought 52

Letters 56

Model answers **62**

Activity 1 62
Activity 8 63
Activity 11 64
Activity 12 64
Activity 13 65
Activity 14 66

Introduction

Welcome to this unit of the SMAT materials, *Farm Management and Leadership 1*.

SMAT stands for Support Materials for Agricultural Training. The units in SMAT are to help you improve your communication skills and your numeracy skills, so you can succeed at training programs or communicate more successfully in your workplace.

This unit helps you with the reading, writing and spoken communication skills you need to deal with farm management and leadership. This unit is not a complete course in farm management and leadership, but it will support you if you do a course in farm management and leadership.

Where this fits

SMAT has four topics: *Farm Management and Leadership, Farmers as Employers, Occupational Health and Safety* and *Agricultural Production.*

This unit is Level 1 of *Farm Management and Leadership.* There are three units of *Farm Management and Leadership:* Level 1 (starting), 2 (continuing) and 3 (completing). Each unit has two parts: Communication Skills and Numeracy.

After you finish this unit, you could try the other units at the same level: *Agricultural Production 1*, *Farmers as Employers 1* and *Occupational Health and Safety 1.*

Then you could try the units at a higher level.

You do not have to complete every unit in SMAT. It is up to you to choose the most useful parts and work through them.

How to use these materials

You can use the SMAT materials by yourself, with someone to help you, or in a group or class. It is hard to work by yourself, so it is a good idea to have someone who can give you advice and feedback (a mentor). This person could be a trainer from a college or community centre, a relative, a neighbour or a friend.

The unit is written so you can start at the beginning and work through it. Or if you like you can choose parts of the unit and only do those parts. Spend more time on the parts which are most useful for you. If something is not useful, you can skip it.

There is no certificate to go with the SMAT materials. But SMAT helps you improve your skills so you can do other courses and get other certificates. For example: FarmSmart, Rural Business Management and courses run by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment. You will also find that working through SMAT improves the communication and numeracy skills that you need in your working life.

Outcomes

After you finish the SMAT material, you will be able to communicate more effectively in speech and writing and use numeracy skills more effectively. You will be able to write a formal letter, complete simple application forms and conduct interviews.

How long should I spend?

This depends on you. The amount of time will be different if you are working by yourself or in a group, with a mentor or without, and if you do all the activities or not. Take enough time to do all the activities that are relevant to you, to a standard high enough to satisfy you.

Activities

Each unit has a number of activities for you to do. In the Communications units there are four types of activities:

- key word activities
- reading activities
- writing activities
- spoken communication activities.

Sometimes you can write answers to these activities in the book. Sometimes it is better to write them in a notebook. Sometimes for the spoken communication activities you will need to go and speak to some other people.

In some places there are also practice writing and practice reading activities. These are extra activities. You can choose to do them if you think you want extra practice in something.

Most of the activities have model answers in the back of the book. You can also ask your mentor to check your answers.

What you need

Before you start, make sure you have the following:

- a notebook (A4 size is best)
- pens, pencils, highlighter pens
- a file or folder to keep extra papers.

Assessment

There is no formal assessment for SMAT. But it is a good idea to have a mentor look at what you have done. That way you can decide together what you have learned and what you need to improve.

Remember, the SMAT materials are a resource for you to use to improve your skills. It is up to you how you use them and how much of them you use.

Application forms

When you apply for something, for example a loan, a credit card, a place on a course, or a licence, you usually have to fill in a form.

Many forms ask for personal details such as name, address, postcode, phone number and so on.

In this unit, *Farm Management 1*, we will look at how to read, understand and complete basic forms.

In *Farm Management 2* and *Farm Management 3* we will look at complex forms like loan applications.

Activity 1

In this activity you will look at the words that are often found on forms.

forms

These words are often found on forms:

occupation

next of kin

spouse or partner

nationality

signature

marital status

for office use only

subscription

membership number

declaration

as above

enclose

1. Match the key words with their meanings here.

   - Your job

   - Whether you are single, married, de facto, separated, divorced, widowed

   - Your wife, husband, or person you live with

   - A legal promise

   - Where you sign your name

   - Your close family

   - Where you are a citizen

   - Do not write here – it is for the office

   - If you are a member of something (for example, the Victorian Farmers Federation), the number you have

- The same as before

- Money to pay for a regular service

- Put in the envelope

names on forms

These words are used for names on forms:

surname

given name (first name)

maiden name

initials

title

2. Match the key words with their meanings here.

- Mr, Ms, Miss, or Mrs

- The first letters of your first names, for example J for John

- A woman's name before she is married

- Family name, for example, Smith

- First name, for example, Joe or Maria

abbreviations

Forms also often use abbreviations. An abbreviation is a short way of writing words of groups of words. Sometimes it will only be one letter. Here are some common abbreviations:

M

F

DOB

yrs

tel

Ph

n/a

No.

d/m/y

w/o

3. Match the key words with their meanings here.

- Telephone number (two answers)

- Date of birth

- Male

- Years

- Day/month/year

- Female

- Without

- Number

Here is a form requesting personal details. Tom has filled it in.

Personal Details

USE BLOCK LETTERS AND BLACK INK

Surname: MOORE Title: MR

First names: THOMAS STEPHEN

Home address: MOORES FARM, OLD MILL ROAD

Town or suburb: TAMURA

State: VICTORIA Postcode: 3999

Phone Number: 019 1919 9191

Postal address: MOORES FARM P.O. BOX 123

TAMURA, VICTORIA 3999

Sex:
(circle one): (Male) Female D.O.B.: 30 / 12 /54

Nationality: AUSTRALIAN

Next of kin/emergency
contact person Name: SUE MOORE

Phone Number: 019 1919 9191

Marital status
(circle one): single (married) divorced / separated / widowed

Partner's / spouse's name: SUE MOORE

Names of children
(if applicable): BARBARA MOORE

HENRY MOORE

Employment Details

Occupation: DAIRY FARMER

Name of employer: SELF-EMPLOYED

Business address: AS ABOVE

Town or suburb:

State: Postcode:

Phone Number:

Signature: *T. Moore*

Activity 2

1. Here is a personal details form. Fill it in carefully with your own information, and get someone to check it for you. Then you can keep it to help you fill in forms in future.

Personal Details

USE BLOCK LETTERS AND BLACK INK

Surname: ..... **Title:** .....

First names: .....

Home address: .....

Town or suburb: .....

State: ..... **Postcode:** .....

Phone Number: .....

Postal address: .....

.....

Sex:
(circle one): Male Female **D.O.B.:** .....

Nationality: .....

Next of kin/emergency contact person Name: .....

Phone Number: .....

Marital status
(circle one): single / married / divorced / separated / widowed

Partner's / spouse's name: .....

Names of children (if applicable): .....

.....

Employment Details

Occupation: .....

Name of employer: .....

Business address: .....

Town or suburb: .....

State: ..... **Postcode:** .....

Phone Number: .....

Signature: .....

2. Here are some more forms. What is each form an application for? Practise filling them in with your information. If you want more practice, you can look for other examples and keep them in your folder.

Black and Coloured Sheep Breeders' Association of Australia. Vic. Inc.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

NAME MR MRS MISS _____

ADDRESS _____

_____ POSTCODE _____

TELEPHONE _____

I/We hereby apply for membership of B.& C.S.B.A.A. and agree if admitted to the Association to abide by the constitution and rules.

I/We own/breed No. of black and coloured sheep of the following breeds:

_____ No. ewes ____ No. rams ____

_____ No. ewes ____ No. rams ____

_____ No. ewes ____ No. rams ____

No. of lambs (under 1 year) _____ No. of wethers _____

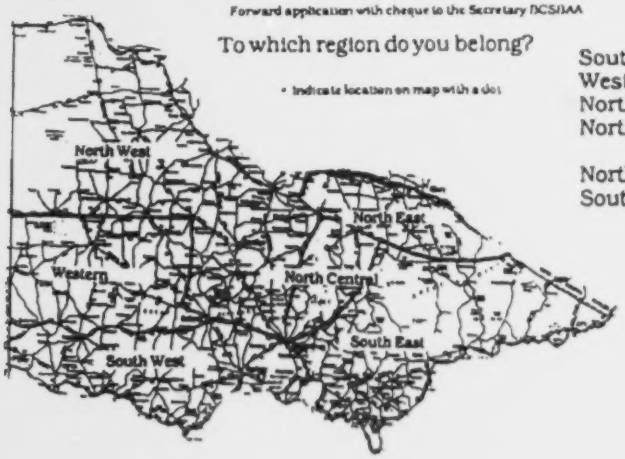
Herewith remittance $ _____ for financial year ending 30th June

Signed _____ Date _____

Forward application with cheque to the Secretary BCSBAA

To which region do you belong?

• Indicate location on map with a dot



- South West ☐
- Western ☐
- North West ☐
- North East ☐
- North Central ☐
- South East ☐

Reproduced with permission from the Black and Coloured Sheep Breeders Association of Australia (Vic.) Inc.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

REGISTRATION

New Zealand 1998

WORLD MERINO CONFERENCE

Mail or fax to:
Vth World Merino Conference
PO Box 16
Kirwee, Canterbury
New Zealand
Phone/fax: +64 3 318 1792

Please Print Clearly

Delegate Title _____ Initials _____ Family Name _____
(Dr Mr Mrs Ms etc.)

Accompanying Person Title _____ Initials _____ Family Name _____
(Dr Mr Mrs Ms etc.)

Preferred Names for nametags: _____

Postal Address: _____

_____ Country _____

Phone _____ Fax _____
include country & area code include country & area code

Translation Service required: ☐ Yes ☐ No
(subject to demand. English/Spanish translation will be provided)

PAYMENT

	Early Bird before 1/9/97	Standard from 1/9/97	Single Supplement	Total number	Price NZ$ (includes GST)
Preconference Farm Tour					
Standard	$2,150	$2,365	$450		
Superior	$2,650	$2,915	$775		
Queenstown upgrade (applies to standard tour only)	$61	$67	$45		
Marlborough Sounds alternative 20/3/98	$60	$65			
Otago alternative 24/3/98	$40	$45			
Homestay where available (circle one)	Yes	No			
Mini Farm Tour					
Canterbury tour day & functions	$225	$250			
Postconference Tour					
Country Living - Superior	$1,750	$1,925	$608		
Bay of Islands Extension	$700	$770	$199		
Expo and Conference					
Expo & Conference	$500	$550			
Conference session - attending Concurrent Session: Grower Marketing Initiatives	Yes	No			
Banquet (per person)	$100	$100			
Subtotal					

Reproduced with permission from
World Federation Stud Merino Breeders

VICTORIAN FARMERS FEDERATION

FARRER HOUSE, 24-28 COLLINS STREET, MELBOURNE 3000
TELEPHONE (03) 9207 5555 FAX (03) 9207 5500

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: ..... Member Number: .....

Address: .....

..... Post Code: .....

Telephone Number: ( ) .....

Fax Number: ( ) .....

If the member is a company or Partnership, please nominate the name of one person authorised to represent the membership at meetings and vote on its behalf .....

☐ (Please tick appropriate box)

VFF ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION	$ .....
VFF EMPLOYMENT HANDBOOK SERVICE	$ .....
OTHER	$ .....
TOTAL	$ .....

☐ PLEASE DEDUCT FROM MY CREDIT CARD CHARGES TOTALLING $ _____

☐ BANKCARD ☐ MASTERCARD ☐ VISA

SIGNATURE _____ Exp. Date _____

FIGHTING FOR YOUR RIGHTS

As farmers, we're the backbone of Australia - its history and future. But it's hard enough fighting drought, fire and flood without having to fight for our rights as well.

That's why the Victorian Farmers Federation is there to stand up for you. As Australia's largest state farmer organisation, we're the only recognised voice protecting the interests of all Victorian farmers, no matter how big or small. By professionally lobbying government on a wide range of issues.

HAVE YOUR VOICE HEARD

We can't fight the elements of nature. But we can help you fight the elements and maintain your rights in government. All it takes is the support of each and every farmer to unite as one voice by registering as a member of the Victorian Farmers Federation.

VFF'S ACHIEVEMENTS

With your support we can continue to make a difference. Some of our recent achievements include:

- State tax on petrol reduced by 3 cents/litre and tax on diesel by 4 cents/litre.
- $4 G million for rural producers in 1997.
- Lobbied against abolition of diesel rebate worth $80 million a year to Victorian farmers.
- Twice negotiated lower rates than any other state.
- $150 subsidy for rollover protection on tractors.

VFF BENEFITS WITHOUT MEMBERSHIP FORM

As a member of the VFF you're entitled to discounts on insurance, clothing, footwear, motels, vehicles, tours, motor spirits, batteries, computers, tyres and much more.

You can also rely on the VFF to provide a wide range of services and supply free legal and financial advice.

HELP US HELP YOU

The equation is simple, the more members we have, the more power we wield and the more influence we have over government. Help us help you and join the Federation that's protecting your interests.

GIVE US A CALL

Call now on our direct line (03) 9207 5555 or fill out the attached form, and a VFF field officer will organise a time to come to your property and discuss the advantages of joining the VFF in more detail.

FILL IN THE FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

_____

_____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

Mobile: _____

Fax: _____

Property Location: _____

_____

Your main area of rural enterprise:

☐ Beef/Cattle ☐ Fruit

☐ Wool ☐ Pigs

☐ Dairy ☐ Vegetables

☐ Cropping ☐ Flowers

Other: _____

_____

_____

Reproduced with permission from the Victorian Farmers Federation Pastoral Group.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Yes! Please deliver my subscription to Stock and Land for 12 months ... only $93.60

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ State _____ Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

I enclose my cheque for $_____ for my subscription to Stock and Land or charge my credit card:

❑ Bankcard ❑ Mastercard ❑ Visacard Expiry Date _____/_____

Card No. ❑❑❑❑ ❑❑❑❑ ❑❑❑❑ ❑❑❑❑

Signature _____

Please deliver my subscription ❑ By Australia Post ❑ To my newsagent for my collection

Name and address of local newsagent _____

_____

_____ Newsagent Telephone _____

Post this form with your cheque or credit card details to:

Stock and Land Subscriptions, PO Box 160, Port Melbourne Vic. 3207 or Freecall 1800 035 351

** Subscriptions are tax deductible for bona fide primary producers.

Reproduced with permission from Rural Press

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Interim Board Members of The Australian Wool Growers Association are:
Mr Peter Laird - Chairman (NSW),
Mr David Webster - Vice Chairman (WA),
Mr Bill Bredhauer (Qld), Mrs Sandra Richards (Qld), Mr Kevin Bredhauer (Qld), Mr Murray McClure (SA), Mr Ian Farrar (NSW), Mr Tom Silcock (Vic), Mr Geoff King (Vic), Mr Fred House (WA), Mr John Roydhouse (NSW), Mr Steve Nicholson (NSW)
Ms Maree McCaskill, Campaign Director
Mrs Marion Gibbins, Association Secretary

Considerable support for the need for reform is being expressed by wool growers around the country. In addition, individual government members are also recognising this need for change as well as stud breeders, wool buyers and processors.

Your support in the call for change in structures and democratic representation of ALL wool growers is vital. It is only through action with a strong united body representing ALL wool growers that necessary reforms with a commercial focus will succeed.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ **Fax:** _____

Wood Production: Number of bales? Normal _____ **1995/96** _____

Membership is $20 per member. A receipt will be issued.

Secretariat: P.O. Box 326 Horsham 3402
Phone: (03) 53 811866 Fax: (03) 53 826022

Figure 1: Examples of forms
Reproduced with permission from the Australian Woolgrowers Association.

Application forms–longer answers

The forms in the previous section only needed short answers. But sometimes forms ask for long answers. In this section we will look at how to write long answers. We will go through the whole process step-by-step.

You can use this process any time you are writing something important.

Here is an example.

Tom is applying for a study tour to New Zealand. To be selected, he has to fill in a form. The form asks him to write about his farming experience.

Following, is what Tom wrote about his farming experience.

UNITED DAIRYFARMERS OF VICTORIA
VFF COMMODITY GROUP AND AFFILIATED WITH ADFF
34-38 Collins Street, Melbourne, Vic. 3000.
Phone: (03) 9207 3600
Fax No: (03) 9207 3611

ADFF 1997 NEW ZEALAND STUDY TOUR

APPLICATION FORM

1. **PERSONAL DETAILS**

Surname: .....

Christian name(s): .....

Date of Birth: .....

Will your spouse/partner accompany you (at own expense)? Yes No Maybe

If Yes, Name of spouse/partner: .....

Your address .....

..... Postcode: .....

Phone No: ( ) ..... Fax No: ( ) .....

VFF/UDV Membership Number and Branch: .....

2. **FARMING EXPERIENCE**
Write a brief note about your farm operations, farming experience and length of farming experience:

We have a 110ha dairy farm in Tamura, south west Victoria. we have 100 cows.

I have 30 years experience of dairy farming. I got my first job at 16 on a farm milking 25 cows. After 2 years I moved to a larger farm at Colac where 80 cows were milked. In 1980 my wife Sue and I bought this farm and we have built it up. In 1989 we also bought the neighbouring farm.

3. **INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT**
(List involvement in dairy industry and farming organisations - both current and past

The Dairy STATE

Example: description of farming experience
Reproduced with permission from: Tony Audley, United Dairyfarmers of Victoria.

Tom did not write this the first time. To get to this stage he went through quite a long process.

Writing skill: the five stages of writing

1. Think and talk about what to write.
2. Make a plan.
3. Write a first draft.
4. Check and fix the draft.
5. Write a final version.

Let's go through the five steps.

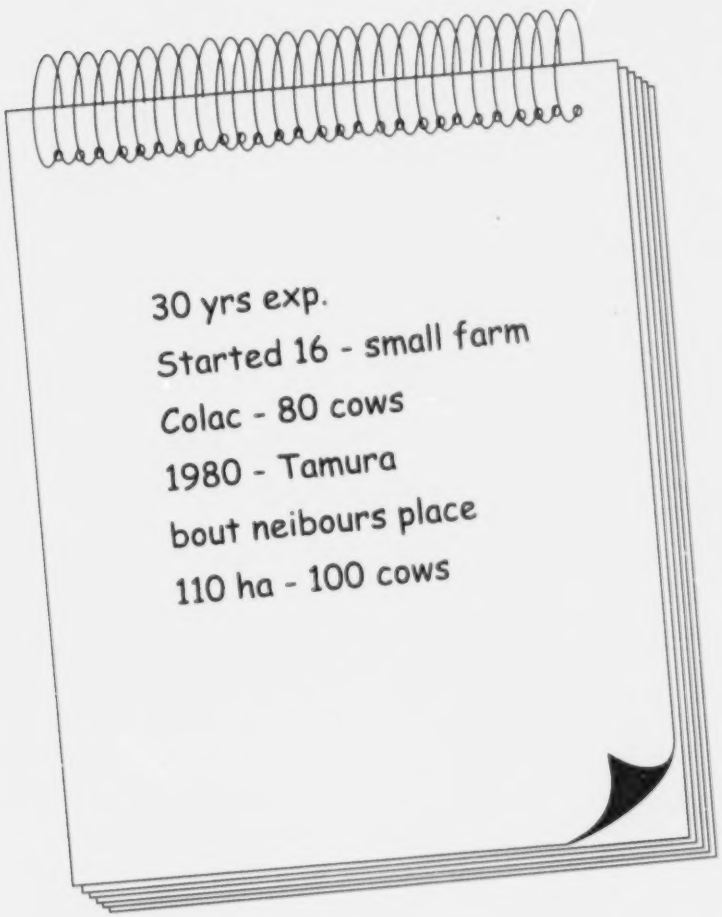
1 Think and talk about what to write

Experience! I'll say! 30 years of it! I started at 16. Then I went to a big farm at Colac. We bought this place in 1980. And the neighbour's place in 1989. That's 110 hectares. We've built it up ourselves.

24

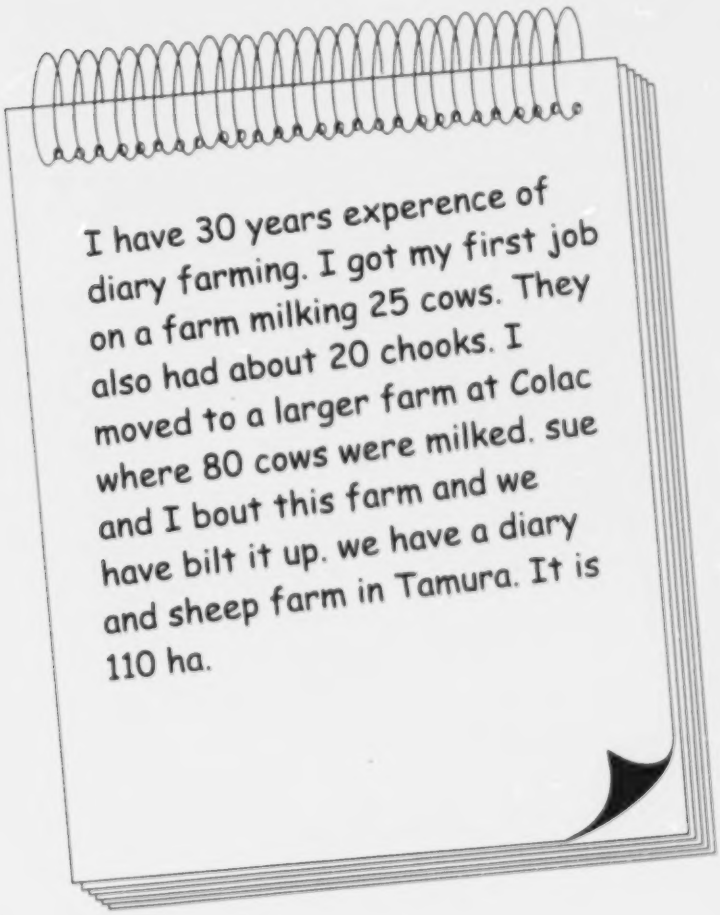
2 Make a plan

Tom decides what to write about and makes this plan:



3 Write a first draft

Then Tom writes a first draft on another piece of paper. He just writes down everything he and Sue thought of. He leaves plenty of space to make changes. There are some mistakes, because it is a first draft.


I have 30 years experence of diary farming. I got my first job on a farm milking 25 cows. They also had about 20 chooks. I moved to a larger farm at Colac where 80 cows were milked. sue and I bout this farm and we have bilt it up. we have a diary and sheep farm in Tamura. It is 110 ha.

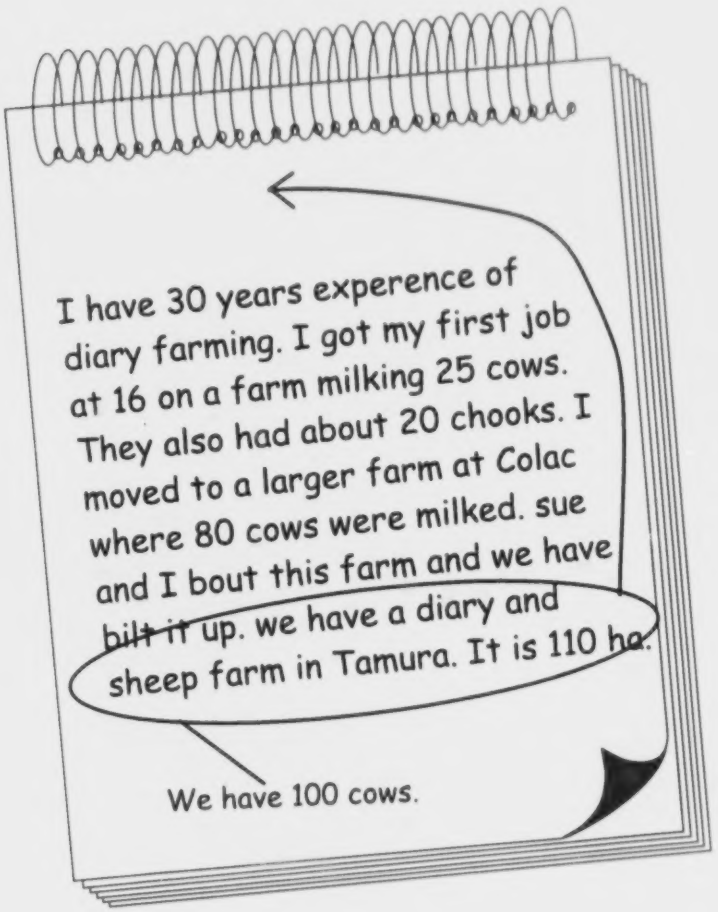
4 Check and fix the draft

Tom and Sue then talk about what they have written.

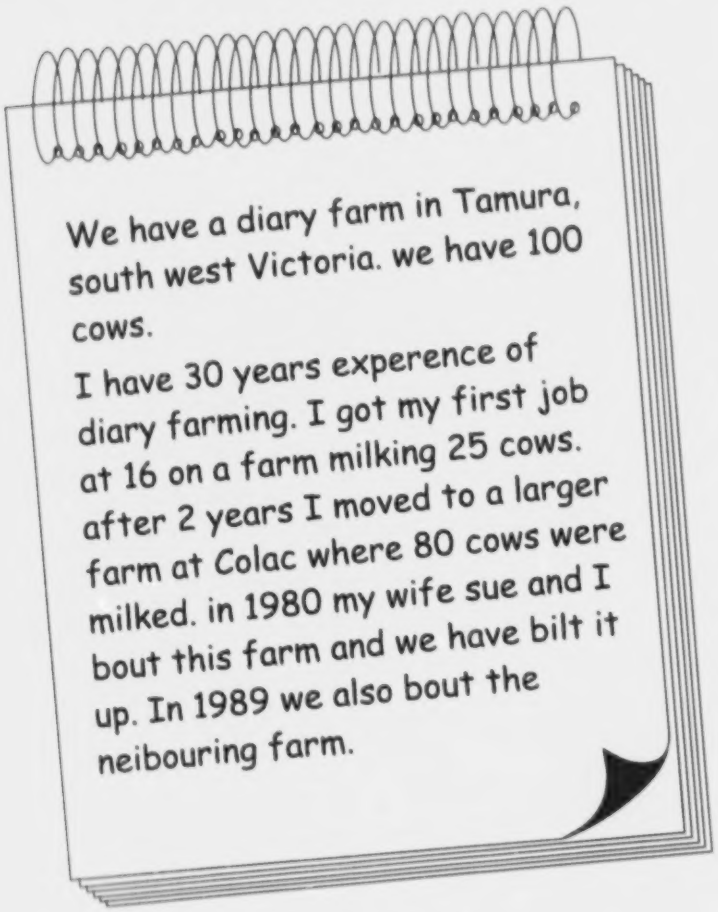
The question says 'farm operations' first - so we can put our farm first, then our experience.
I think you should say how many cows we have.
I'll take out the bit about the chooks - it's not important for dairy farming.
Let's have two sections instead of just one.

What other changes could they make? Do you have any suggestions?

Tom and Sue marked all the changes on the first draft like this:


I have 30 years experence of diary farming. I got my first job at 16 on a farm milking 25 cows. They also had about 20 chooks. I moved to a larger farm at Colac where 80 cows were milked. sue and I bout this farm and we have bilt it up. we have a diary and sheep farm in Tamura. It is 110 ha.
We have 100 cows.

Then they wrote it all again. Tom and Sue's second go is like this.



We have a diary farm in Tamura, south west Victoria. we have 100 cows.

I have 30 years experence of diary farming. I got my first job at 16 on a farm milking 25 cows. after 2 years I moved to a larger farm at Colac where 80 cows were milked. in 1980 my wife sue and I bout this farm and we have bilt it up. In 1989 we also bout the neibouring farm.

Spelling

In this section there are some ideas about how to fix up your spelling. For more ideas, see the spelling section in *Farmers as Employers 2*.

Tom goes through and underlines all the spellings he is not sure of.

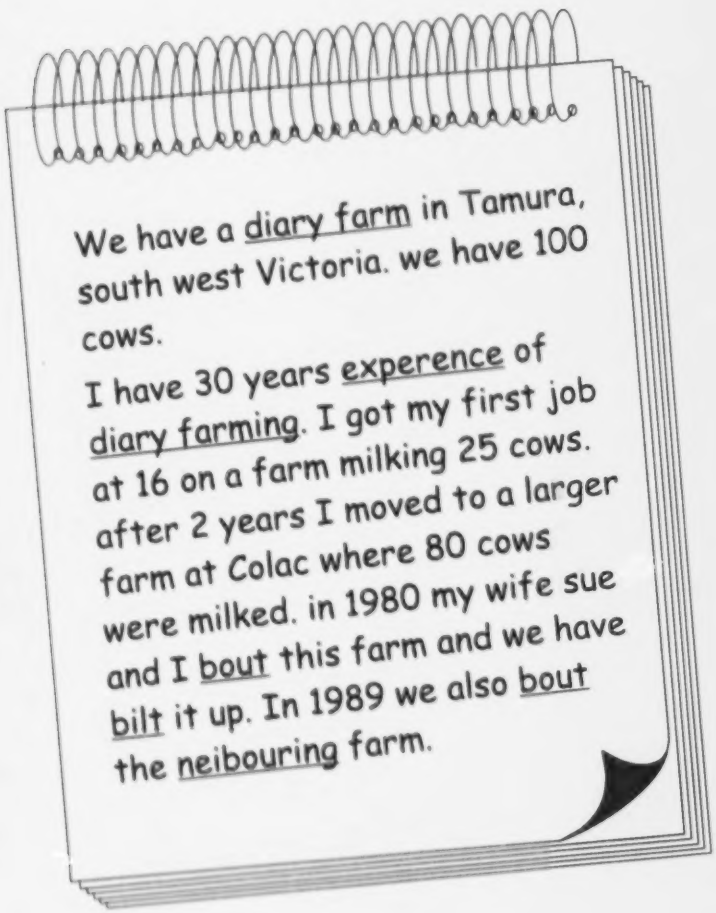

We have a diary farm in Tamura, south west Victoria. we have 100 cows.
I have 30 years experence of diary farming. I got my first job at 16 on a farm milking 25 cows. after 2 years I moved to a larger farm at Colac where 80 cows were milked. in 1980 my wife sue and I bout this farm and we have bilt it up. In 1989 we also bout the neibouring farm.

Figure 2: Dairy farm - words circled

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The words "dairy" and "experience" are printed on the form. Tom gets Sue to read out the spellings while he corrects his own.

d-a-i-r-y

e-x-p-e-r-i-e-n-c-e

This leaves three words : "neibouring" "bout" and "bilt"

Sue checks "neibouring" in the dictionary. To check the spelling of a word in a dictionary, you first must have some ideas about how to spell it, or you will never find it. This time it works because she knows the first few letters.

neigh *n.* **1.** the sound a horse makes; a whinny. - *v.i.* **2.** to make such a sound; to whinny.
neighbour = neighbor *n.* **1.** one who lives near another. **2.** a person or thing that is near another. **3.** a fellow being subject to the obligations of humanity. -*adj.* **4.** *US.* living or situated near to another. -*v.t.* **5.** to place or bring near. **6.** to live or be situated near to; adjoin; border on. -*v.i.* **7.** to associate on the terms of neighbours; be neighbourly or friendly (fol. by with). **8.** to live or be situated nearby.
neighbourhood = neighborhood *n.* **1.** the region near or about some place or thing; the vicinity. **2.** a district or locality, often with reference to its character or inhabitants; *a fashionable neighbourhood.* **3.** a number of person living near one another or in a particular locality; *the whole neighbourhood was there.*

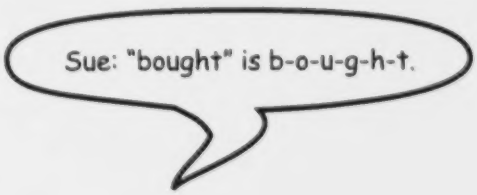
Figure 3: Dictionary entry
Reprinted from The Macquarie Dictionary, 3rd edition, courtesy of The Macquarie Library Pty Ltd, 1997.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The gh in neighbour reminds Sue of some other words that have gh. Some of these are:

- light
- night
- sight
- ought
- thought
- brought.

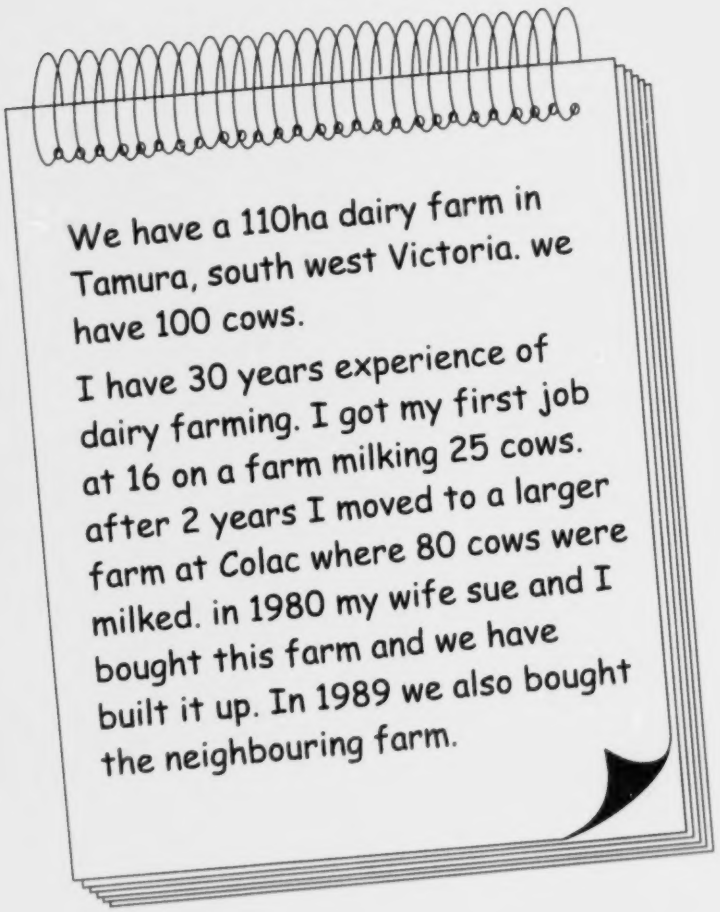
Patterns like this can often help.



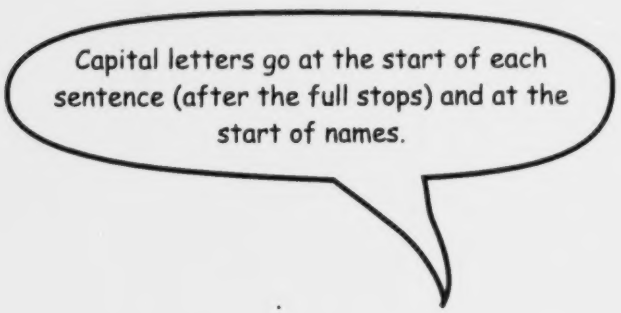
Finally, "bilt" is a similar word to "builder". Tom and Sue have a builder's card on their fridge:

So the right spelling is "built".

Tom's answer now looks like this.

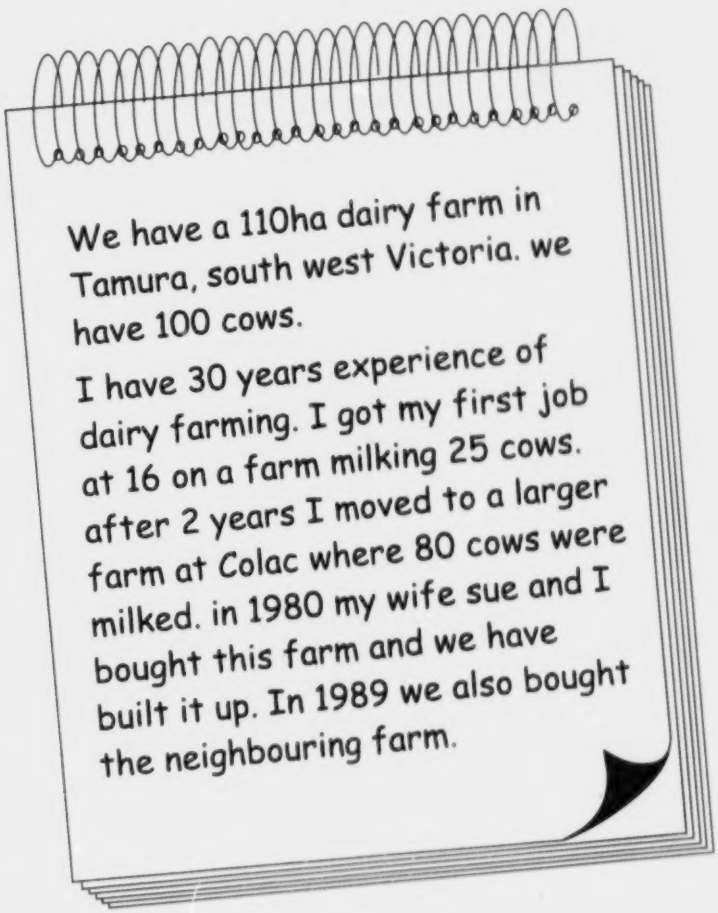

We have a 110ha dairy farm in Tamura, south west Victoria. we have 100 cows.
I have 30 years experience of dairy farming. I got my first job at 16 on a farm milking 25 cows. after 2 years I moved to a larger farm at Colac where 80 cows were milked. in 1980 my wife sue and I bought this farm and we have built it up. In 1989 we also bought the neighbouring farm.

Finally, they have to fix up some of the letters. Sue knows the rule:



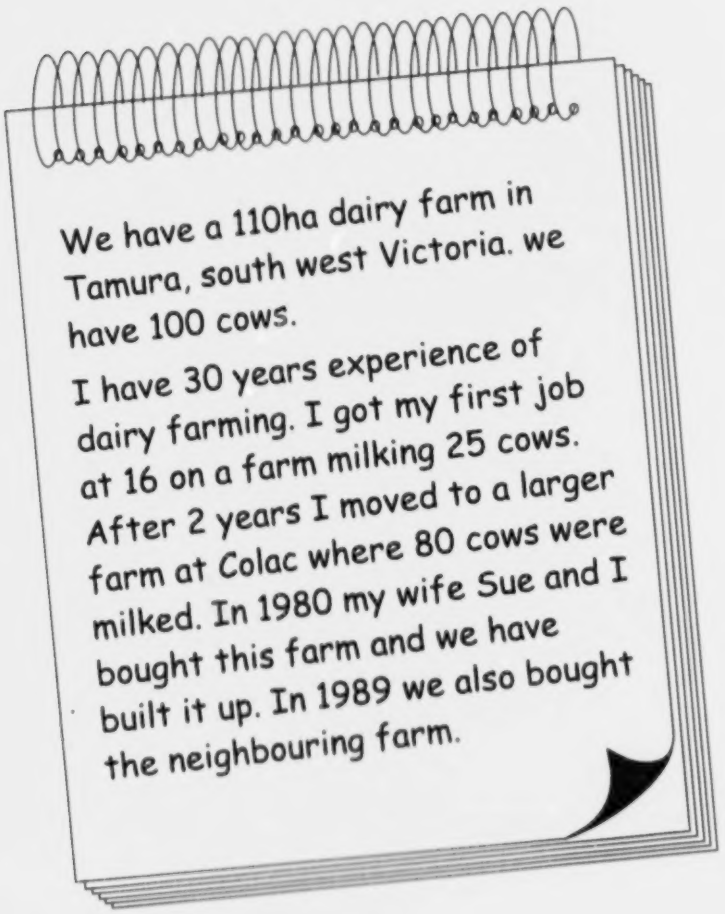
Activity 3

Where should capital letters go on this text? Add them here.


We have a 110ha dairy farm in Tamura, south west Victoria. we have 100 cows.
I have 30 years experience of dairy farming. I got my first job at 16 on a farm milking 25 cows. after 2 years I moved to a larger farm at Colac where 80 cows were milked. in 1980 my wife sue and I bought this farm and we have built it up. In 1989 we also bought the neighbouring farm.

5 Write a final version

The final version is like this.



We have a 110ha dairy farm in Tamura, south west Victoria. we have 100 cows.

I have 30 years experience of dairy farming. I got my first job at 16 on a farm milking 25 cows. After 2 years I moved to a larger farm at Colac where 80 cows were milked. In 1980 my wife Sue and I bought this farm and we have built it up. In 1989 we also bought the neighbouring farm.

Activity 4

Now answer the question about farming experience for yourself.

Go through the same process. Write the plan, draft and changes on a sheet of paper.

Remember the process.

Writing skills: five stages of writing

1. Think and talk about what to write (look at Tom and Sue's answer for ideas).
2. Make a plan.
3. Write a first draft.
4. Check and fix the draft.
5. Write a final version.

Farming experience. Write a brief answer about your farming operations and farming experience.

Interviews

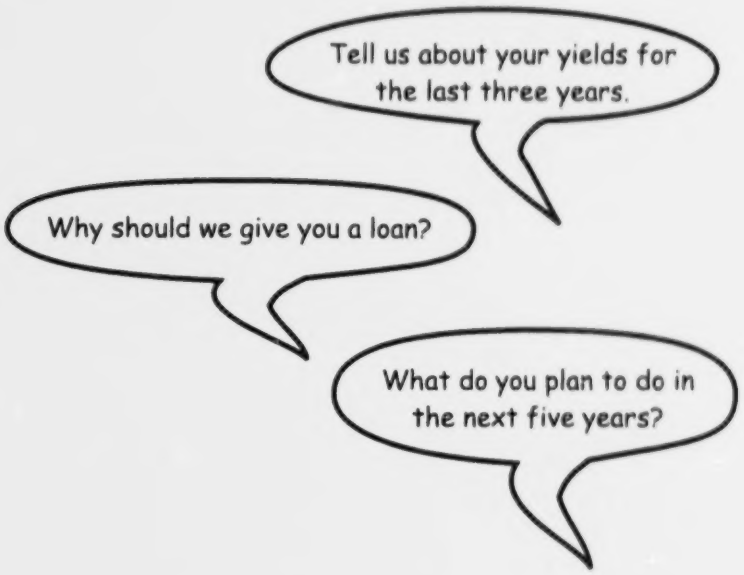
Tom may have to go for an interview to get on the study tour.

Interviews are used to select people for:

- study tours
- jobs
- loans
- renting a house or property
- training courses.

Whatever the reason for the interview, those interviewing are looking for the same thing. They want to decide:

- how suitable you are for the loan, the job or the course
- how reliable you are.



While it is hard to write an application, you can do many drafts and get help from others. Tom did several drafts and got Sue to help him. It's a bit different when you go for an interview as:

- you are by yourself
- you want to show why you should be chosen
- you don't want to forget anything.

Lena and Mario have just employed Chris, a new share-farmer. They chose him from six others, even though he was not the most experienced. These are the reasons they gave.

He was keen to learn and seemed willing to work hard.
He'd done a chemical users' course.
He'd thought about the interview and wanted a career in dairying.
We rang his referees who backed up what he said.

Interviews are about selling yourself. You have to convince people that you are a person who can be relied on to do a job, repay a loan or finish a course.

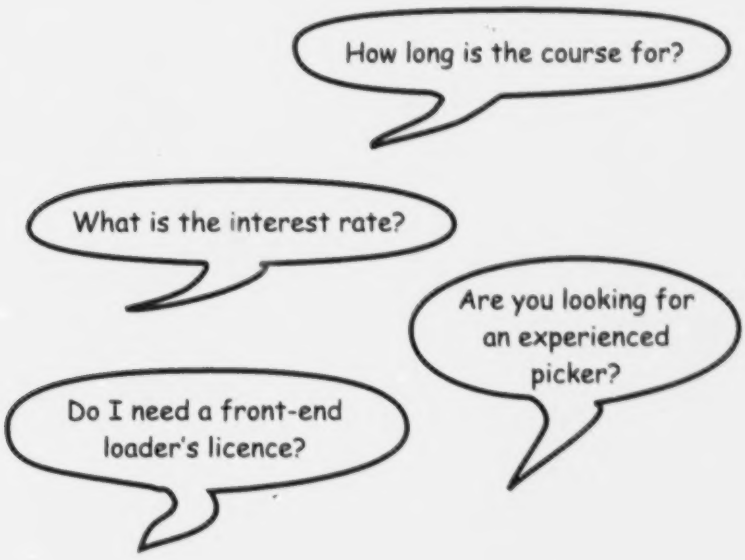
Before the interview

Think about what questions you might be asked at an interview and what sort of person the interviewers want.

Look at:

- the position description
- the application form
- course brochures.

They should give you some idea of what questions you may be asked. You may also like to ring up to get more information.


How long is the course for?
What is the interest rate?
Are you looking for an experienced picker?
Do I need a front-end loader's licence?

Write down your experience and any questions you would like to ask in the interview. It is easy to forget and notes will jog your memory.

Take along some papers or figures to back up what you say at the interview.

Activity 5

Remember the study tour that Tom was applying for? The tour is for farmers to travel to New Zealand.

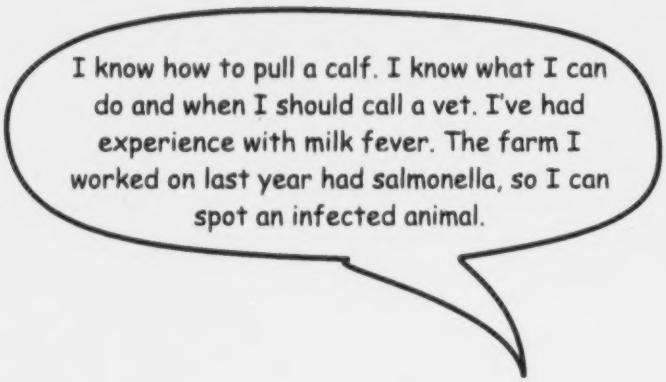
What questions do you think Tom could be asked in an interview?

Write down some ideas.

At the interview

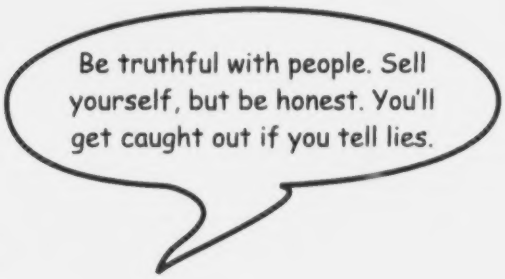
Make the most of your experience. Tell them about yourself and let them see why they should give you the loan, the job or the place in the course. Answer with more than a yes or no. Speak clearly and look at the people as you answer their questions.

This is what Chris said at the interview when he was asked about his experience with dairy herds.


I know how to pull a calf. I know what I can do and when I should call a vet. I've had experience with milk fever. The farm I worked on last year had salmonella, so I can spot an infected animal.

Listen carefully to what is said. Look at the person asking questions.

Mario gave this advice.



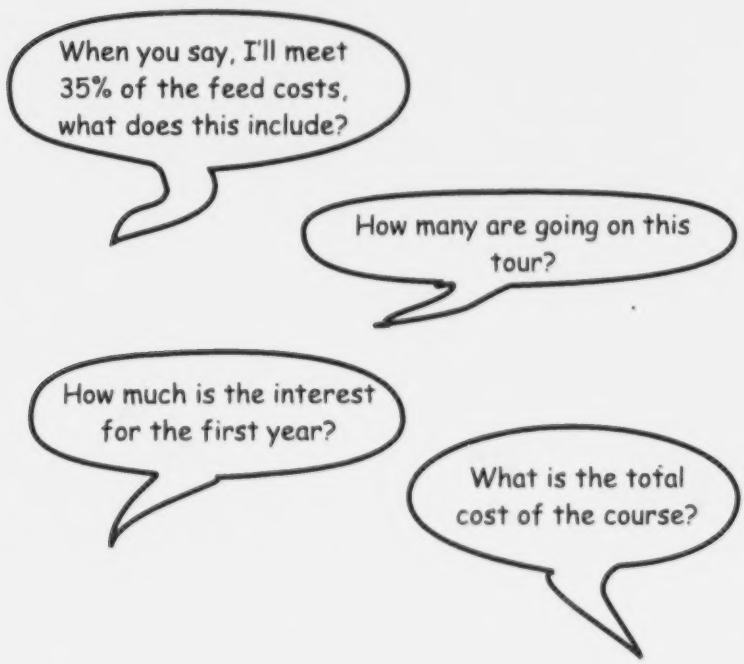
Activity 6

In an interview, if you were asked about your experience in farming, what would you include? What would you emphasise? Write your answers here.

At the end of the interview

Remember to ask questions yourself. You may find you:

- don't want the job/the course/the study tour
- don't like the terms offered
- need more information.


When you say, I'll meet 35% of the feed costs, what does this include?
How many are going on this tour?
How much is the interest for the first year?
What is the total cost of the course?

Give the names and contact details of two referees. Referees are people who can talk about your work experience and recommend you for the job. Choose people who will back up what you say. Always let them know they might be contacted. Then they can be prepared.

Activity 7

Who would you ask to be your referees if you were going for a position as a share farmer? List your referees here.

Scanning the classified ads

In the example in the last section, Tom was applying for a study tour. These days, lots of farmers are doing different kinds of training.

In the past, farmers learned things from their parents, from experience, and from other farmers. It is still important to learn about farming like that. But another way of learning is to go to a college, a training centre or a Neighbourhood House and do a course. Many courses can take place on farms too. Local farmers can get together and organise their own training.

training

Here are some words that apply to training:

certificate diploma degree*course.*	*These are qualifications you get when you finish a* *Certificate is the lowest, degree is the highest. A certificate course will usually have more emphasis on practical work.*
Post-secondary	*after finishing secondary school*
training provider	*any place where you can do a course*

To find out about courses, there are a few things you can do. You can ask other farmers and find out by word of mouth. You can ask farmers' organisations or the Department of Natural Resources and Energy. You can contact your local TAFE College, community education centre or Neighbourhood House. A lot of courses are advertised in newspapers too.

Reading skills: scanning

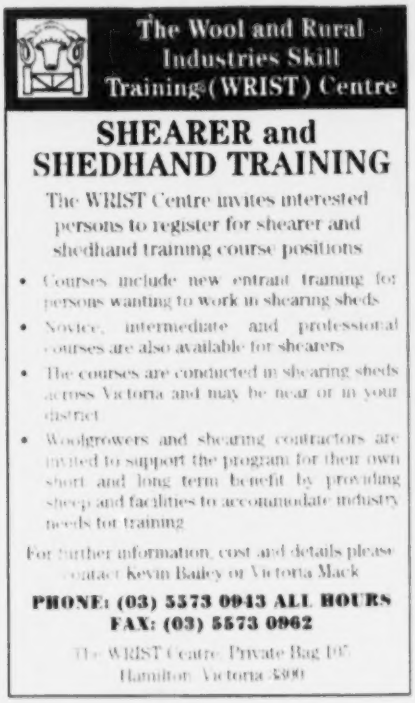
Scanning means reading quickly to find something in particular. For example, you scan a railway timetable for the right train or the newspaper for a football score.

For example, when you read ads you do not have to read every word. Normally you are only looking for one or two key words that interest you. This is called scanning.

Activity 8

1. Scan the followsing ads to find good courses for these people.

   - Ron has been a small hobby farmer for 20 years. He is now thinking seriously about ostriches and would like to find out more about farming them.
   - Sarah has just left school. She wants to be a shearer but has no experience.
   - Mary has been running the farm finances for her family for years. She would like to learn how to use a computer.
   - Giovanni needs to get the Farm Chemical Users' Certificate.



The Wool and Rural Industries Skill Training (WRIST) Centre

SHEARER and SHEDHAND TRAINING

The WRIST Centre invites interested persons to register for shearer and shedhand training course positions

- Courses include new entrant training for persons wanting to work in shearing sheds
- Novice, intermediate and professional courses are also available for shearers
- The courses are conducted in shearing sheds across Victoria and may be near or in your district
- Woolgrowers and shearing contractors are invited to support the program for their own short and long term benefit by providing sheep and facilities to accommodate industry needs for training

For further information, cost and details please contact Kevin Bailey or Victoria Mack

PHONE: (03) 5573 0943 ALL HOURS
FAX: (03) 5573 0962

The WRIST Centre, Private Bag 197, Hamilton, Victoria 3300

Reproduced with permission from the Wool and Rural Industries Skill Training Centre.

External Studies

Study at home, at work, anytime, anywhere!

External studies gives you the flexibility to study at your own pace, in your own time, at your location. Study is supported with excellent resources, tutors and workshops.

Business/Computer courses

Accounting
Computing (Basic to Advanced)
Occupational Health & Safety
Office Administration
Sales & Marketing
Small Business Management
Workplace Leadership & Management

Real Estate course

Agents Representative Course

Rural Studies

Woolclassing

and many more

Phone us toll free today for more details

1800 067 209

UNIVERSITY OF BALLARAT

Reproduced with permission from the University of Ballarat

At Longerenong Business is Booming!

Already 1000 students have studied units in the ***Certificate in Rural Office Practice****. In this popular home study course you will learn to master Windows 95, manage farm finances, keep efficient records and confidently prepare cash flows, budgets and taxation returns.*

The ***Certificate/Diploma in Rural Business Management*** *gives you a professional edge in planning and managing a rural business or primary production enterprise. You may elect advanced computer studies, marketing or become an expert in agricultural climatology.*

Both courses offer the flexibility of ***home study*** *with* ***close tutor contact****. Workshops for hands-on experience and seminars are held in your local area.*

Give your ***rural business*** *the* ***business edge*** *it deserves!*

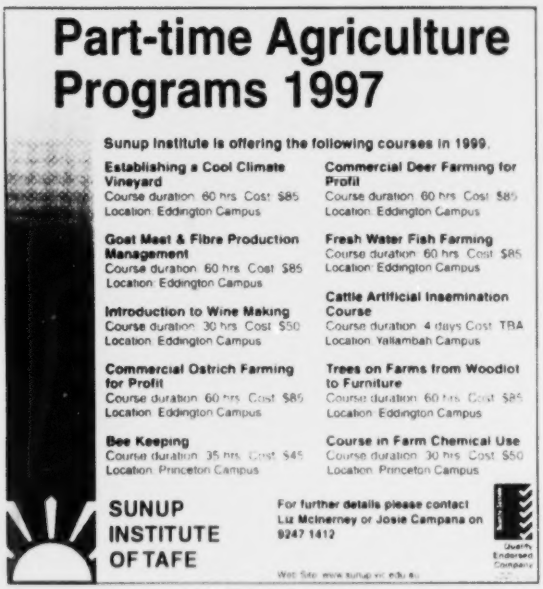
For information contact Carolyn toll free on 1800 814294

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

LONGERENONG
RMB 3000 HORSHAM, 3400

Reproduced with permission from the Melbourne University, Longernong

BEST COPY AVAILABLE


Part-time Agriculture Programs 1997
Sunup Institute is offering the following courses in 1999.
Establishing a Cool Climate Vineyard
Course duration: 60 hrs Cost: $85
Location: Eddington Campus
Goat Meat & Fibre Production Management
Course duration: 60 hrs Cost: $85
Location: Eddington Campus
Introduction to Wine Making
Course duration: 30 hrs Cost: $50
Location: Eddington Campus
Commercial Ostrich Farming for Profit
Course duration: 60 hrs Cost: $85
Location: Eddington Campus
Bee Keeping
Course duration: 35 hrs Cost: $45
Location: Princeton Campus
Commercial Deer Farming for Profit
Course duration: 60 hrs Cost: $85
Location: Eddington Campus
Fresh Water Fish Farming
Course duration: 60 hrs Cost: $85
Location: Eddington Campus
Cattle Artificial Insemination Course
Course duration: 4 days Cost: TBA
Location: Yallambah Campus
Trees on Farms from Woodlot to Furniture
Course duration: 60 hrs Cost: $85
Location: Eddington Campus
Course in Farm Chemical Use
Course duration: 30 hrs Cost: $50
Location: Princeton Campus
SUNUP INSTITUTE OF TAFE
For further details please contact Liz McInerney or Josie Campana on 9247 1412

Farm Chemical Users Course
Developed in response to the Victorian Farmers Federation for a higher level of competency in the safe use of Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals. Legislation requires farmers to hold a certificate to use certain chemicals
Learn more about Selecting Chemicals, decanting and using chemicals. Transporting and Storing them safely. The course also concentrates on Pest Control, Applying cleaning up and disposing of chemicals as well as First Aid
Two courses to be held as follows:
Harrow - 8th & 11th April
Caring Bush Nursing Centre
Marylebone - 15th & 17th April
Marylebone High School
NB Bring calculator, pen and paper
Contact Marylebone Institute of TAFE on 03 59 111 55 or
Caring Bush Nursing Centre on 03 5588 1111 or the Hopeville High School on 03 97 0121
MT Marylebone TAFE

Figure 4.: Training ads

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

They are looking for some training. Which course is suitable for each person? Write the name of the course, the college and a contact number in the space provided.

Ron

Course: .....

College: .....

Phone number: .....

Sarah

Course: .....

College: .....

Phone number: .....

Mary

Course: .....

College: .....

Phone number: .....

Giovanni

Course: .....

College: .....

Phone number: .....

2. Is there any kind of training that you need? Look in your local newspaper, in a magazine or a bulletin to find some ads about training courses. Make notes about any course that may be useful. (Add these notes to your folder.)

Get to the point

Scanning is a way to get the important points when you are reading. You often need to do this when you are talking to people.

How often have listened to someone talking and thought:

- Get to the point!
- What is he on about?
- This is going right over my head.

Jeff, a grazier, tells of his experience.

I listened to a chemical expert tell me all about this new oral drench for my ewes.
He told me all about the trials, when to give the drench to the ewes and how much to give to the maiden ewes. He went on for about five minutes until I just had to butt in.
I asked him how long it gave protection for. I was really only interested in using drench capsules so when he said the dose only gave short-term protection, I knew I didn't want a bar of it.

When was the last time you listened to a person talking on and on, without getting to the point?

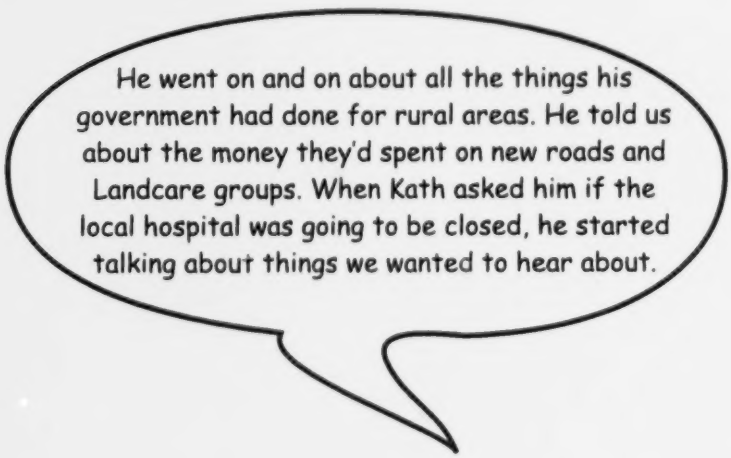
Often when we talk to people they give us information :

- that is not clear
- does not include what we need to know
- includes too much detail.

Sometimes this is deliberate. People do this to:

- make things seem better or worse than they are
- confuse you
- get you to agree with them
- sell you something.

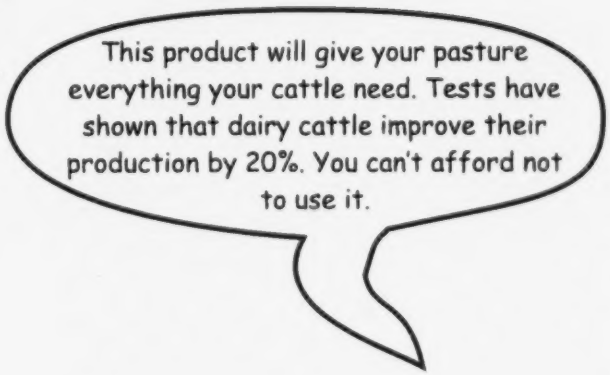
Here's what Jill said after she left a talk given by a politician.


He went on and on about all the things his government had done for rural areas. He told us about the money they'd spent on new roads and Landcare groups. When Kath asked him if the local hospital was going to be closed, he started talking about things we wanted to hear about.

Asking questions

Asking questions makes people get to the point. It shows the person speaking that you are thinking about what they are saying.

Activity 9


This product will give your pasture everything your cattle need. Tests have shown that dairy cattle improve their production by 20%. You can't afford not to use it.

1. What questions would you ask this representative from a fertiliser company? Write them down.

.....

.....

2. Listen to an interview on the radio. It doesn't matter who it is. Choose someone you want to hear! How well did the interview go? Use the following checklist to help you decide.

- Who was interviewed?

.....

.....

- What was the interview topic?

.....

.....

	Yes	No
• Did the person:		
- leave out information?	❑	❑
- include too much information?	❑	❑
- answer the questions asked?	❑	❑
• Was the person:		
- easy to understand?	❑	❑
- brief and to the point?	❑	❑

- Did you learn anything from the interview? If no, why not?

.....

.....

- What questions would you have asked?

.....

.....

Getting the answer you want

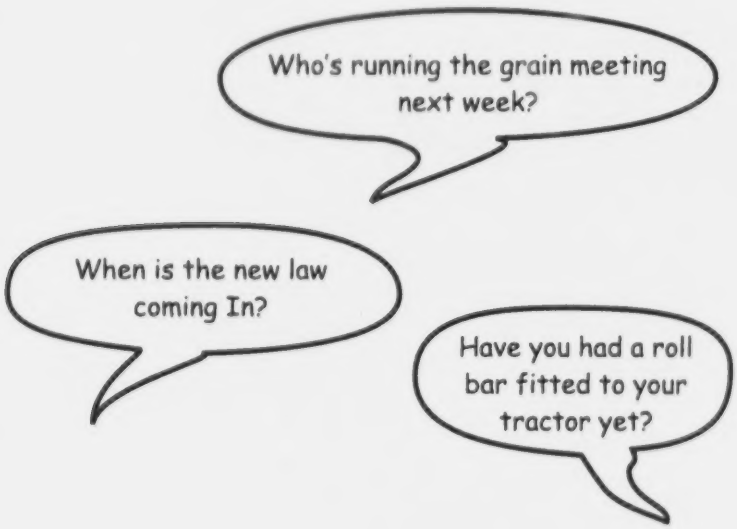
Asking questions lets the person talking know:

- whether they are getting their message across
- what you want to know.

There are different kinds of questions.

Some questions are **closed.**

There is only one correct answer to a closed question. You ask closed questions when you want a short answer or specific information. These are closed questions:



Some questions are **open.** You ask an open question to get detail or if you want to know someone's opinion.

How does that new mouse bait compare to the old one?
Can you tell me more about how shade cloths stand up to bad weather?
What are the safety issues we need to know about?
What do you think of the gun buyback scheme?

Activity 10

Think back to the interview you listened to on the radio in the last activity.

1. Give two examples of closed questions that were asked.

.....

.....

.....

2. Give two examples of open questions.

.....

.....

3. Did open or closed questions get the most detailed answers?

.....

.....

Farm management in a drought

In an earlier section we looked at some small ads, and how to scan them for what you are looking for. In this section we will look at another kind of reading.

When you pick up a newspaper or magazine, you usually look through it quickly first to see if there is anything interesting. This is called skimming.

Reading skills: skimming

Skimming is reading quickly to get a general idea about what you are reading. You may read the front page of a newspaper this way.

To get some idea about the article, you can look:

- at the headline
- at the pictures
- at the headings.

53

Activity 11

1. Below is an article from the *Weekly Times*. First look at the headline, **Beat the drought with more cows.** What do you think it means?

.....

.....

Page 4 **WEEKLY TIMES 2/7/97**

Beat the drought with more cows

Running more cows in a dry season means more feeding and less profit, right? No, not quite.

Three farm trials

The Ellinbank Dairy Research Centre is doing some trials of three different farms to see which is the best. The trial is called the ABC trial. "We put three systems in place and let farmers compare them," said John Taylor, the coordinator.

Farm A is an average Gippsland dairy farm. Farm B aims for high milk production per cow. Farm C has a high number of cows per hectare.

Surviving the drought

In the drought, the profits dropped on all three farms. But Farms B and C still made more money than Farm A. John Taylor says they all survived the drought well.

"We had a group of New Zealand farmers here last week, and they wanted to know where the drought is!" laughed John.

Plan ahead

In a hard season, the key to success is to plan ahead. "We were not getting much pasture, so we fed the B and C cows hay and grain from outside sources. This is more expensive, but you can still make a profit. Over several years, the good years offset the bad year."

Making money

In fact, all the farms are making more money than the industry average, even Farm A. On Farm A, grain feeding costs were lower than on most farms. "This shows there is scope for the average farm to improve management," says John.

by John Parry

Figure 5: Weekly Times 2/7/97

Reprinted courtesy of the Herald and Weekly times

2. Skim the headings quickly. What do they tell you about the article?

.....

.....

3. What do you think the article is about? Highlight your answer.

   - How droughts affect sheep farms.
   - The problem of droughts on dairy farms.
   - How dairy farmers can do well in a drought.

4. If you are interested, you can read the article in detail.

droughts

Here are some words from the article:

drought

trial

profit

average

pasture

5. Match the key words with the meanings:

   - Money made in business
     .....
   - Test
     .....
   - Normal, ordinary
     .....

- Paddock grass for grazing stock
  .....
- Long time of no or little rain
  .....

6. Now read the article carefully. Think about these questions:
   - What is the point of the trials?
   - What are the results of the trial for the three farms?
   - What can dairy farms do to make a profit even in the drought?
7. After reading the article, discuss these questions.
   - What is the point of the trials?
   - What are the results of the trial for the three farms?
   - What can dairy farms do to make a profit even in a drought?

Activity 12

This activity helps you develop your vocabulary and practise spelling. Choose the right word to complete the sentence. Write the word in the space.

survive **production** **drought** **profit**
season **plan**

1. This has been a hard ..... for many Australian farmers.
2. There has been a long ..... It is difficult for farmers and their families to .....
3. Farmers need to think about the future and make a ..... Even in dry times, farm .....can be good, and farmers can still make a ..... .

Letters

Sometimes, you may want to contact an organisation. You may need to:

- ask for information (make an enquiry)
- order something
- complain
- make a claim.

You can often do this face-to-face or over the phone. But sometimes it is better to put things in writing. You may need to write a formal business letter.

Formal letters about business and official matters are not like informal letters you send to family or friends. We use formal words and lay out the letters a bit differently.

In this section we will look at letters of enquiry. In any formal letter (or phone enquiry) it is important to keep it short, and make your enquiry as clear as possible. Before you write, think about: who to write to, and exactly what you want.

Writing skills: Writing a formal letter

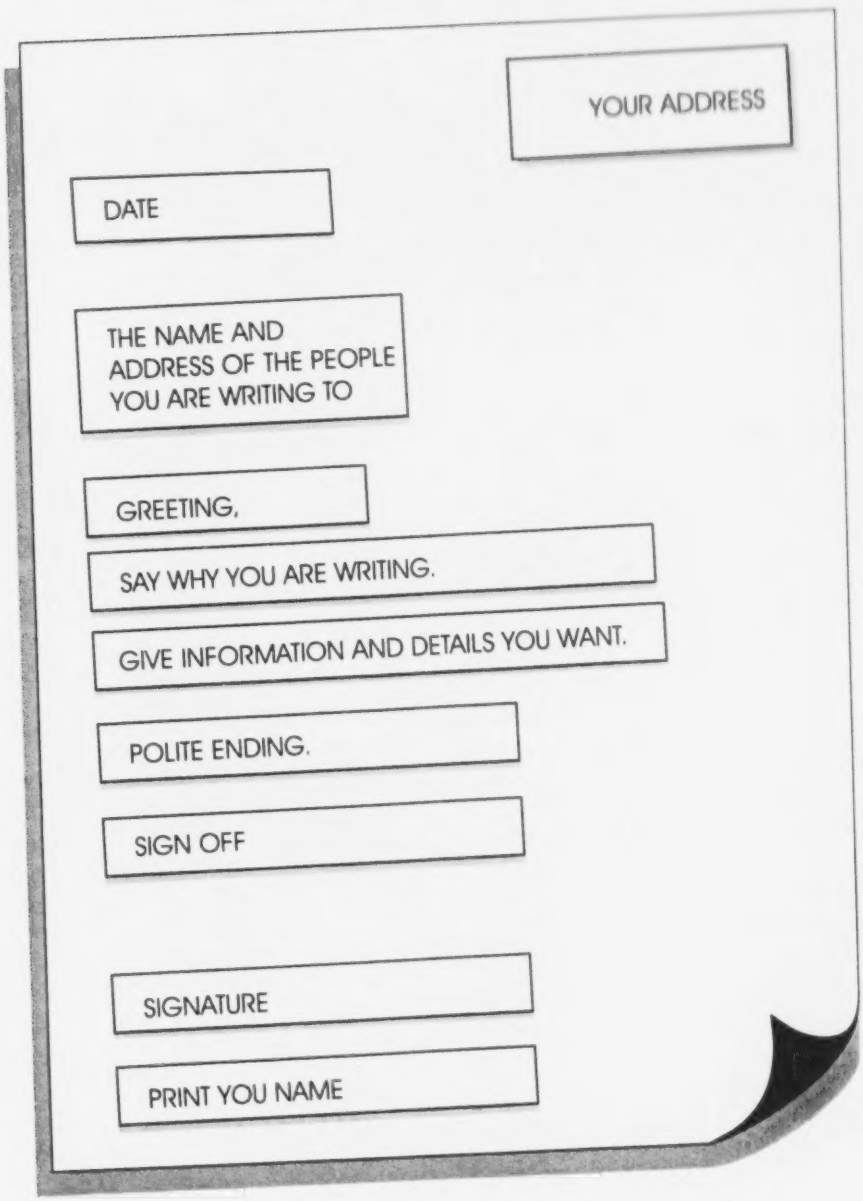
When you write a formal letter, like an enquiry letter, follow these rules.

1. Use formal language.
   e.g. I would like some information about courses.
2. Be brief and to the point.
   e.g. I am interested in studying Rural Management.
3. Be polite.
   e.g. Please let me know the cost.
4. Be clear and give details you need.
   e.g. Could you give me the date the course starts?

People often type formal letters to make them easy to read. Write clearly if you cannot type.

Formal letters follow a plan.

Here is a plan of a formal enquiry letter.



Letter A

Sender's address
Receiver's name, if you know it, or job position, and their address
The date
Heath's Farm
PO Box 909
Tamura Vic 3999
2nd July 1997
Mary Travis
Dept of Rural Studies
Timtangalong College of TAFE
Timtangalong Vic 3998
A polite greeting start with Dear Sir/Madam if you do not know the receiver's name. (If you do not know, it is often worth a phone call to find out the name of the right person.)
Dear Ms Travis,
I would like some information about the courses you offer at your college.
Say why you are writing
I am interested in studying Rural Business Management. Please let me know the cost of the course and the date when the course starts. If possible, I would prefer to study part-time.
Give information and details about what you want
Thank you for your assistance.
Yours sincerely,
You can put a polite ending like this
Tom Heath
Tom Heath
Print your name
Signature
Sign off

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Activity 13

Here is another letter. Donald and Margery are writing to a school asking for information. The parts of the letter are mixed up. Put them in the right order, then write the letter.

Letter B

We would also like to know the fees you charge for boarders, and details of application procedures.

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Principal's secretary
St Anselm's College
Woop Woop Vic 3998

Would you please send us information about your school and its facilities.
Virginia has just completed Year Five at Woop Woop Primary School.
Donald and Margery Farmer
Yours sincerely,

We are looking for a school for our 10 year old daughter Virginia, starting in January 1998.
21 January 1997

Dusty Creek Farm
Main Road
Dusty Creek Vic 3997

Activity 14

1. Here is another letter, similar to the others. Complete the letter by writing one word in each space. All the words you need are in Letter A and Letter B.

14 Station Street
Tamura Vic 3999

14th December 1997

Customer service manager
Oz Country Records
PO Box 299
Bendigo Vic 3550

Dear Sir/Madam,
I would like some 1)..... about one of your recording artists. I recently heard a song called "I'm Just a Lonely Stockman" by Howling Keith Roberts on the Tamura FM Country Hour. The radio announcer said that this song is available on the Oz Country label. I enjoyed the song and I am very 2)..... in this artist. Could you please 3)..... me a catalogue including all the albums by Howling Keith Roberts.

Thank you for your 4).....

Yours 5).....,

Nora Watkins

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

2. Think about some information you need. It could be about education, your supplies or finance. Try writing a letter asking for the information you want.

You can find more information about writing letters in *Farm Management and Leadership 2 and 3*.

Model answers

Activity 1

1 Key words: forms

- Your job *occupation*
- Are you single, married, separated, divorced, widowed? *marital status*
- Your wife, husband, or person you live with *spouse or partner*
- A legal promise *declaration*
- Where you sign your name *signature*
- Your close family *next of kin*
- Where you are a citizen *nationality*
- Do not write here - it is for the office *for office use only*
- If you are a member of something (for example the VFF) what is your number *membership number*
- The same as before as *above*
- Money to pay for a regular service *subscription*
- Put in the envelope *enclose*

2 Key words: names on forms

- Are you Mr, Ms, Miss, or Mrs *title*
- The first letters of your first names, for example J for John *initials*
- A woman's name before she is married *maiden name*
- Family name, for example, Smith *surname*
- First name, for example, Joe or Maria *given name (Christian name)*

63

3 Key words: abbreviations

- Telephone number *tel or Ph*
- Date of birth *DOB*
- Male *M*
- Years *yrs*
- Not applicable (means this does not apply to you) *n/a*
- Day/month/year *d/m/y*
- Female *F*
- Without *w/o*
- Number *No.*

Activity 8

Question 1

- Ron: Commercial ostrich farming for profit at Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE.
- Sarah: Shearer training at the Wool and Rural Industries Training centre.
- Mary: Computer course at Wimmera Institute of TAFE, or Certificate in Rural Office Practice at Longerenong.
- Giovanni: Farm Chemical Users Course at South West TAFE.

Activity 11

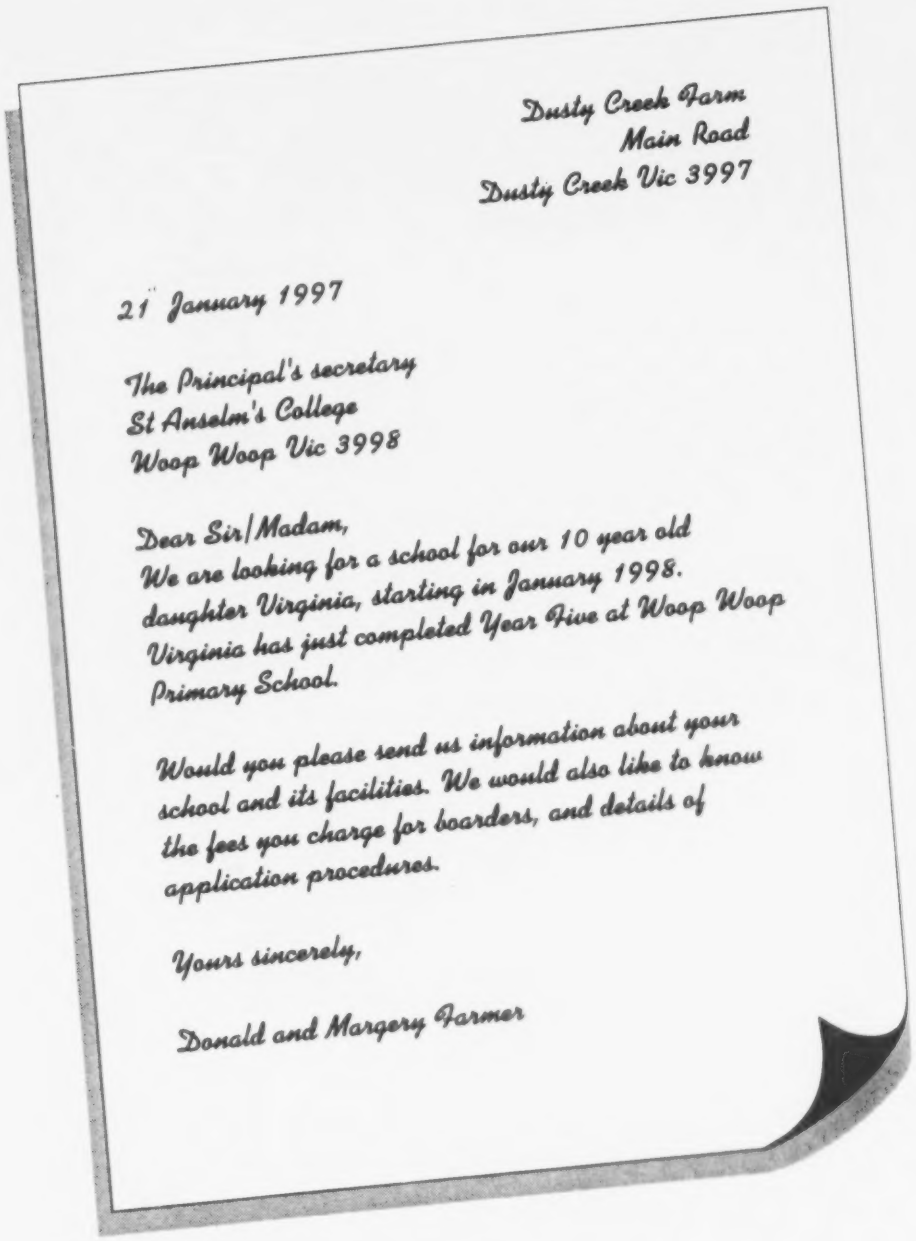
5 **Key words: droughts**

- Money made in business *profit*
- Test *trial*
- Normal, ordinary *average*
- Grass for feeding stock *pasture*
- Long time of no or little rain *drought*

Activity 12

1. This has been a hard *season* for many Australian farmers.
2. There has been a long *drought*. It is difficult for farmers and their families to *survive*.
3. Farmers need to think about the future and make a *plan*. Even in dry times, farm *production* can be good, and farmers can still make a *profit*.

Activity 13



Dusty Creek Farm
Main Road
Dusty Creek Vic 3997

21 January 1997

The Principal's secretary
St Anselm's College
Woop Woop Vic 3998

Dear Sir/Madam,
We are looking for a school for our 10 year old daughter Virginia, starting in January 1998. Virginia has just completed Year Five at Woop Woop Primary School.

Would you please send us information about your school and its facilities. We would also like to know the fees you charge for boarders, and details of application procedures.

Yours sincerely,

Donald and Margery Farmer

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Farm Management and Leadership

Level 2

Support Materials for Agricultural Training

Acknowledgments

These units were developed as an initiative of the Victorian Farmers Federation and Primary Skills Victoria. They have been written and prepared by Kangan Batman TAFE.

Project Development Team:

Project Manager:	Barbara Goulborn
Writers:	Nick Gadd, Michele Lucas
Illustrations:	Tracey Lean
Graphics and Desktop Publishing:	Kelisha Dalton, Simon Colvey, Maryjeanne Watt, Betty Franklin
Editing:	Helen Yeates, Philip Kofoed, Angela Costi
Instructional design:	Elizabeth McInerney
Reviewers:	Clare Claydon, industry representative Rob Tabener, Wimmera Rural Counselling Service
Series reviewer:	Malcolm Trainor, Instructor, Agricultural Education Centre, University of Ballarat

Project Steering Committee:

Clare Claydon:	Victorian Farmers Federation, 1997
Airlie Worral:	Victorian Farmers Federation
Lyn Hughes:	Primary Skills Victoria
John Nicholls:	Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs
Tony Audley:	United Diary Farmers of Victoria
Ken Stone:	Victorian Farmers Federation, industry representative
Colin Hunt:	Victorian Farmers Federation, industry representative
Margaret Brodie:	Victorian Farmers Federation, industry representative
Michael Kearney:	Victorian Farmers Federation, industry representative
Nickie Berrisford:	Grain Industry Training Network
Andrew Sullivan:	Agricultural Education Centre, University of Ballarat
Malcolm Trainor:	Agricultural Education Centre, University of Ballarat

Published and distributed by:
The Language Australia National Resource Centre
Language Australia
GPO Box 372F, Melbourne Victoria 3001
Telephone: (03) 9926 4779
Facsimile: (03) 9926 4780
Email: lanrc@la.ames.vic.edu.au

© 1998 Commonwealth of Australia.

Funded under the Workplace English Language and Literacy Programme by the Commonwealth through the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

Contents

Introduction 1

Where this fits 1
How to use these materials 2
Outcomes 2
How long should I spend? 2
Activities 3
What you need 3
Assessment 4

Farm plans 5

Survey of problems 8

Farm mission statements 10

Goals and strategies 13

Export grants 15

Reaching agreement 16

Applications for funding 21

Writing project proposals 22

Women and farm management 31

Meetings 34

What is an agenda? 35
What are the minutes? 36

Fruit industry tariffs 40

Expressing disagreement 43
Making a point 45

Formal letters 49

Model answers **52**

Activity 1 52
Activity 3 52
Activity 4 52
Activity 11 53

Introduction

Welcome to this unit of the SMAT materials, *Farm Management and Leadership 2*.

SMAT stands for Support Materials for Agricultural Training. SMAT will help you improve your written and spoken communication skills and your numeracy skills, so you can succeed at training programs or communicate more successfully in your workplace.

This unit helps you with the reading, writing and spoken communication skills you need to deal with farm management and leadership. This unit is not a course in farm management and leaderships, but it will support you if you do a course in farm management and leadership.

Where this fits

SMAT has four contexts: *Agricultural Production*, *Farmers as Employers*, *Farm Management and Leadership* and *Occupational Health and Safety*.

This unit is Level 2 of *Farm Management and Leadership*. There are three units of *Farm Management and Leadership*: Level 1 (starting), 2 (continuing) and 3 (completing). Each unit has two parts: Communication Skills and Numeracy.

After you finish this unit, you could try the other units at the same level: *Agricultural Production 2*, *Farmers as Employers 2*, *Occupational Health and Safety 2*.

Then you could try the units at a higher level.

You do not have to complete every unit in SMAT. It is up to you to choose the most useful parts and work through them.

How to use these materials

You can use the SMAT materials by yourself, with someone to help you, or in a group or class. It is hard to work by yourself, so it is a good idea to have someone who can give you advice and feedback (a mentor). This person could be a trainer from a college or community centre, a relative, a neighbour or a friend.

The unit is written so you can start at the beginning and work through it. Or if you like you can choose parts of the unit and only do those parts. Spend more time on the parts which are most useful for you. If something is not useful, you can skip it.

There is no certificate to go with the SMAT materials. But SMAT helps you improve your skills so you can do other courses and get other certificates. For example: FarmSmart, Rural Business Management, and courses run by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment. You will also find that working through SMAT improves the communication and numeracy skills that you need in your working life.

Outcomes

After you finish the SMAT materials you will be able to communicate more effectively in speech and writing and use numeracy skills more effectively. You will be able to develop a mission statement, run meetings and complete applications for grants.

How long should I spend?

This depends on you. The amount of time will be different if you are working by yourself or in a group, with a mentor or without, and if you do all the activities or not. Take enough time to do all the activities that are relevant to you, to a standard high enough to satisfy you.

Activities

Each unit has a number of activities for you to do. In the communications units there are four types of activities:

- key word activities
- reading activities
- writing activities
- spoken communication activities.

In the numeracy units there are numeracy activities.

Sometimes you can write answers to these activities in the book. Sometimes it is better to write them in a notebook. Sometimes for the spoken communication activities you will need to go and speak to some other people.

In some places there are also practice writing and practice reading activities. These are extra activities. You can choose to do them if you think you want extra practice in something.

Most of the activities have model answers in the back of the book. You can also ask your mentor to check your answers.

What you need

Before you start, make sure you have the following:

- a notebook (A4 size is best)
- pens, pencils, highlighter pens
- a file or folder to keep extra papers.

Assessment

There is no formal assessment for SMAT. But it is a good idea to have a mentor look at what you have done. That way you can decide together what you have learned and what you need to improve.

Remember, the SMAT materials are a resource for you to use to improve your skills. It is up to you how you use them and how much of them you use.

Farm plans

These days, many farmers find it useful to make a farm plan. In this section, we will look at some of the main ideas and words used in farm plans. But remember, this section does not tell you all about farm planning - to find out more, you need to do a course, for example Farm$mart, or talk to a rural counsellor.

Jenny and Wayne are concerned about their farm. Their soil is becoming increasingly acidic, there is some erosion and salinity in some of the paddocks. They want to make sure the land stays in good condition, so they can hand it on to their children. In the meantime, they want to make a profit.

They decide it is time to make a farm plan. But before they start, they have some questions:

- What is a farm plan?
- When you prepare a farm plan, what do you consider?
- What are the aims of a farm plan?
- What are the benefits of farm planning?
- What does a farm plan include?

Following in Activity 2 is an article from a Farm$mart book about farm planning. Before you read it, look at these key words:

whole farm planning

sustainable

profitable

productivity

opportunities

negotiations

integrate

environment

priorities

Activity 1

Here are the meanings of the key words. Next to each one, write one of the key words.

1. Able to make a profit .....
2. The natural surroundings where people live .....
3. Chances to do things .....
4. Important things to do first .....
5. How much the farm can produce .....
6. Talks with people to reach an agreement .....
7. Able to continue .....
8. To fit in with a larger community .....

Activity 2

1. Now read the article to find the answers to Jenny and Wayne's questions.

Page 2

What is whole farm planning?

Whole farm planning is about making your farm profitable while keeping it sustainable. It is not only about what is happening on your farm now, but also a vision for the future.

The planning process looks at the land, how best to manage the current problems, how to maintain or improve the natural resources of soil, water and vegetation and improve productivity. Farm planning looks at the way things have been done in the past and provides opportunities to put new ideas into practice in the future.

Preparing a farm plan helps you to understand the relationship between your management, profitability and lifestyle. It can take into account all aspects of the farm. A farm plan can be used in negotiations with consultants and financial organisations.

The main aims of farm plans are to:

- work out how to make a profit
- maintain or improve the condition of the resources
- maintain or improve the quality of the living environment
- increase the capital value of the land and farm
- integrate the farm plan with the needs of the catchment and community.

A farm plan should consist of an aerial photograph of your property, a map of the natural features of the farm, a map showing your ideal layout, and a file containing information on the land, your options and priorities for action. The plan you produce is never the final farm plan: the maps and the files can be changed and added to over the years.

FarmSmart: Whole Farm Planning

Reproduced with permission from the FarmSmart program

- What is a farm plan?

- When you prepare a farm plan, what do you consider?

- What are the aims of a farm plan?

.....

.....

- What are the benefits of farm planning?

.....

.....

- What does a farm plan include?

.....

.....

Survey of problems

2. One aspect of a farm plan is understanding what problems exist on the land. Here is a list of possible problems. To rate the importance of the problem on your farm, write 1, 2 or 3 next to each one, (3 means high importance, 2 means medium and 1 means low importance).

Problems in order of importance

Crop establishment management .....

Pasture establishment .....

Salinity .....

Soil erosion control .....

Farm water supply .....

Farm layout .....

Farm wildlife .....

Soil type identification .....

Farm financial control .....

Pest plant and animals .....

Land class capabilities .....

Fertilisers .....

Tree crops .....

Fire prevention and control .....

Fencing .....

Farm mission statements

It is important for a farm, like any organisation, to have a mission statement. Here is an example.

Example: farm mission statement

We own a 1100 ha property. Our business is producing milk from 100 dairy cows, top quality wool and lambs. This provides us with an income of about $30 000 a year. We intend to develop the farm as a business to provide income into retirement. We also plan to replant 1000 trees by the year 2002 to revegetate some cleared areas. We want to hand on the farm debt-free and in good working order to our children in 10 to 15 years' time.

This mission statement has two parts:

- the farm now
- future plans for the farm.

top quality

net income

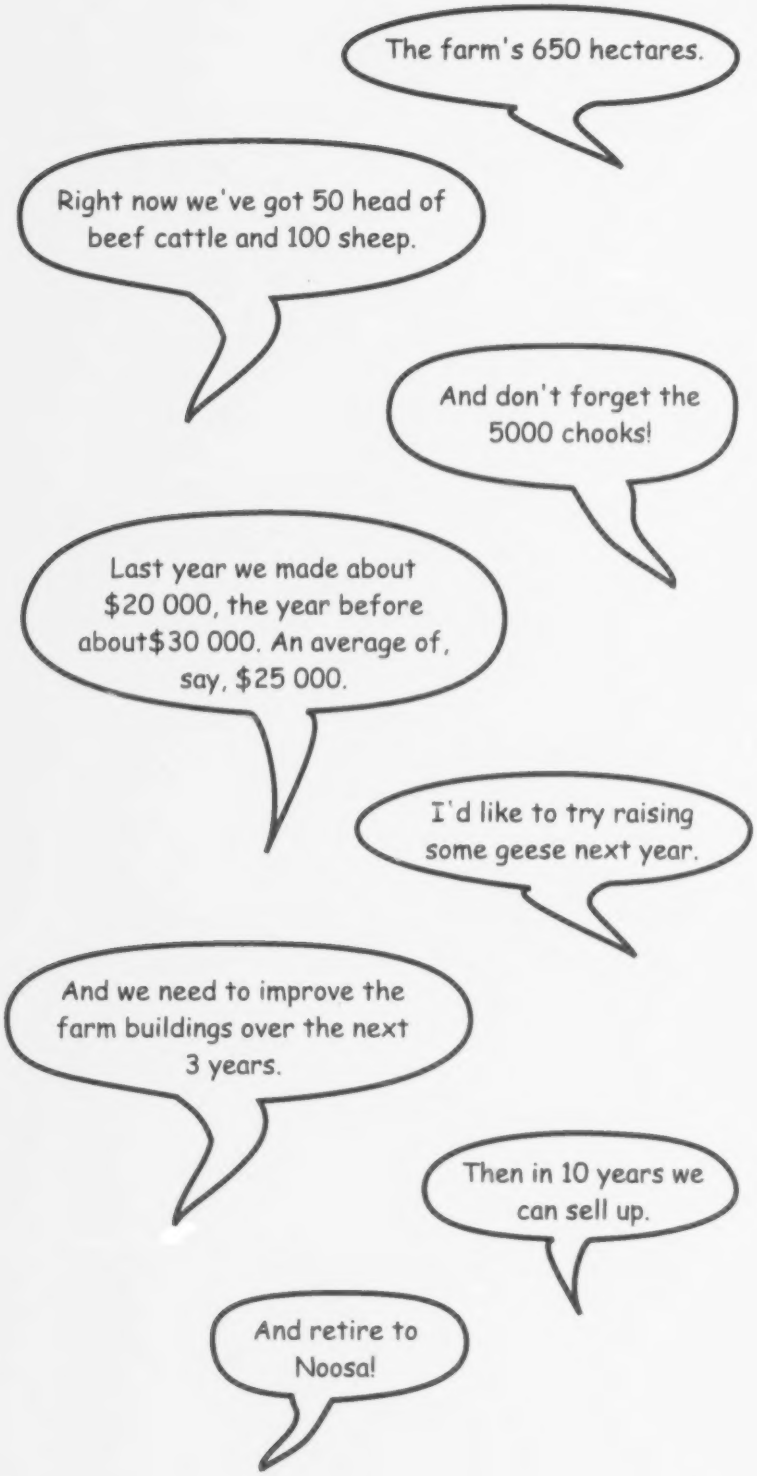
revegetate

debt free

Activity 3

1. Highlight the two sections, "The farm now" and "Future plans" on the example farm mission statement..
2. Match the key words with the meanings.
   - The best .....
   - Put in trees .....
   - Money left after tax .....
   - No money to pay .....

Jenny and Wayne's neighbours, Jack and Maria, also need to write a farm mission statement. These are the ideas they come up with.


The farm's 650 hectares.
Right now we've got 50 head of beef cattle and 100 sheep.
And don't forget the 5000 chooks!
Last year we made about $20 000, the year before about$30 000. An average of, say, $25 000.
I'd like to try raising some geese next year.
And we need to improve the farm buildings over the next 3 years.
Then in 10 years we can sell up.
And retire to Noosa!

Activity 4

1. Use Jack and Maria's ideas to complete the following sentences.

   We own a .....

   Our business is.....

   This provides us with an income of .....

   We plan to ..... next year.

   We also plan to ..... over the next ..... years.

   We want to ..... in ..... years' time.

2. Think about your own farm. Write a brief mission statement.

.....

.....

.....

Goals and strategies

Goals are what you want to achieve. Strategies are what you do to achieve your goals. It is a good idea to decide on strategies for all parts of your farm life. This includes:

- family
- labour
- business
- farm resources.

Here is an example of some goals and strategies. This was written by a dairy farmer thinking about farm resources.

Example: goals and strategies

	Action
Goals	Secure extra 300 – 400ML water within 5 years Automate watering systems over next 2 years (half farm this year, half next year) Improve pastures every 5 years old 16 ha of relasering each year
Strategies	**Land and water** $300 000 for extra land and water next door (preferred)
	Plant and structures $100 000 in reticulated water system (option)
	Livestock Generate own replacements, continually improving genetics.

As you can see from the example, the strategies are specific. They say exactly how much needs to be done and when. They often start with a word that means an action, like *s*[*tart, automate, improve*].

Activity 5

Choose one of the following and write some goals and strategies for your farm:

- family
- labour
- business
- farm resources.

Export grants

Danish cooked pork and Canadian uncooked pork are to be imported to Australia. To assist Australian farmers to compete in overseas markets, the government has offered pig farmers an export incentive grant.

This grant, worth several million dollars, is to be given over the next 3 years. How this money is to spent is to be decided by pig farmers.

This decision will probably be made by groups representing pig farmers. But how do individuals and groups reach an agreement? When people have different opinions and interests, how do they reach consensus?

Sometimes it is impossible. Individuals or the groups they represent cannot always agree. However, agreement is often reached when individuals meet together, share their ideas and reach consensus.

Activity 6

Think back to some groups that you belonged to.

- Did this group need to make a group decision?
- What was it about?
- How did they reach agreement?
- Were you happy with the decision?

Reaching agreement

When individuals need to reach agreement, the first thing they do is meet and share their ideas. It is a good idea to have a leader.

A leader can:

- help the discussion go smoothly
- make sure everyone has a say
- keep people to the point.

Brainstorming

One way of sharing ideas is to start the discussion with a brainstorm. Everyone thinks up as many ideas as possible in a short time. So that everyone feels free to join in, here are some simple rules to follow. In a brainstorm session:

- all ideas are accepted
- there is no criticism of ideas
- no discussion occurs.

Someone writes down the ideas.

Here are some suggestions about how to spend the export grants.

Set up a marketing group to promote our products.
Arrange some training days for pig farmers.
What about investigating more quality control procedures?
Give some money for study tours so that we can see what overseas markets want.

Discussing the ideas

When everyone has given their ideas, then the group can discuss them. The person who made the suggestion can explain their idea.

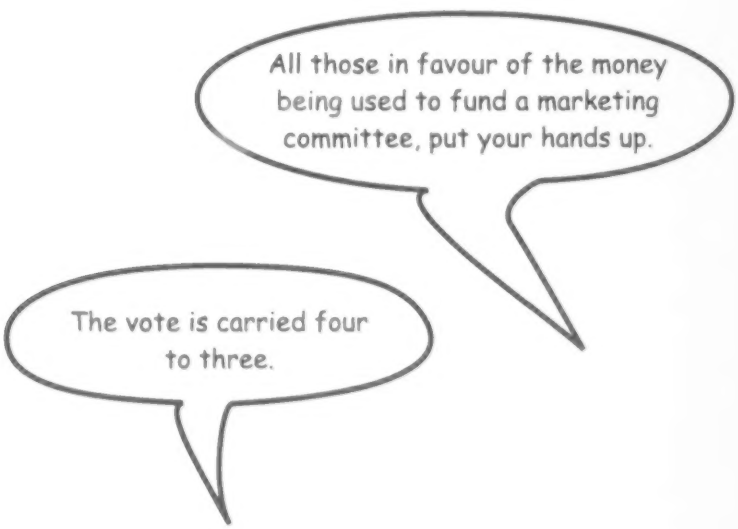
The group then works through all the suggestions. Ideas that the group think will work are kept. Others that are not suitable are put aside.

Making a decision

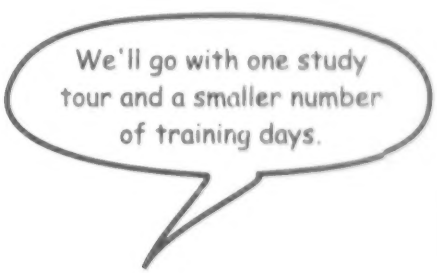
When all ideas have been discussed and the group may need to make a decision. This can be done by:

- voting
- compromising
- reaching consensus.

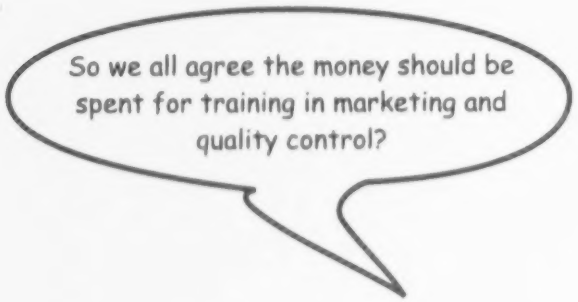
Voting for a suggestion is a quick way to make a decision. However, this can divide a group and people can be very unhappy if there is a close vote.


All those in favour of the money being used to fund a marketing committee, put your hands up.
The vote is carried four to three.

Another way to reach agreement is when the group agree to compromise. This means they make a decision based on the points the group agrees on. They may decide to adapt ideas and put others aside.



A group can discuss ideas until everyone is happy to make a joint decision. Reaching consensus can take a long time, but it's worth it if everyone is happy with the result.



Activity 7

1. Try brainstorming yourself. Your farming sector has been given a government grant aimed at increasing exports. How should the money be spent? Brainstorm a list of ideas.

2. Look at this list again. Which of these ideas seem the best way to spend the grant?

3. How would you convince other people of your ideas?

4. Think back to the last meeting you attended where a vote was taken. What was the reaction of those at the meeting to the result?

5. What other way could the group have reached agreement?

Applications for funding

Farmers often need to apply for grants or subsidies. In this section we will look at how to complete applications like this.

Remember, because the rules about applying for subsidies often change, you need to ask an expert such as a rural counsellor to give you advice about what you can apply for.

You usually need to include some information about your farming background and experience. Look back at *Farm Management 1* for information about this.

You also need to give information about what you plan to do to improve your farm – that is, why you need financial help.

It is important to remember the five stages of the writing process.

Language skills: five stages of writing

1. Think and talk about what to write
2. Make a plan
3. Write a first draft
4. Check and fix the draft
5. Write a final version.

Look back at *Farm Management 1* to refresh your memory of the process.

Writing project proposals

Marjorie and Bill are applying for a subsidy to help them improve their farm. They need to answer these questions on the form. The questions use long words, which may put people off. The meaning of the questions is: what are you going to do, and how will this improve your farm?

Department of Primary Industries and Energy

Productivity Enhancement Proposal

1. **What project is being undertaken to increase the productivity and/or efficiency of your farm business?**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. **What is the expected gain in production and when will it be achieved?**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Reproduced with permission from Department of Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry

Marjorie and Bill have gone through all the steps of the writing process. Here are their answers:

Example: project proposal

Department of Primary Industries and Energy

Productivity Enhancement Proposal

1. What project is being undertaken to increase the productivity and/or efficiency of your farm business?

   We are replacing channel supplied stock and domestic water with a permanent supply of piped water. We are undertaking a major refencing project and reticulating water around the farm. This requires pipes, troughs and tanks. We will also fill in the channels.

2. What is the expected gain in production and when will it be achieved?

   5% more crop will be produced due to the realignment of fences and filling in of channels. 30% more stock will be run because of the improved water supply.

Reproduced with permission from the Department of Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry.

In their answer to the first question, Marjorie and Bill do three things:

- state what they are doing: **We are . . .**
- state what they need: **This requires . . .**
- state their future plans: **We will . . .**

In their answer to the second question, Marjorie and Bill state the productivity increases they expect:

- 5% more crop will be produced . . .
- 30% more stock will be run . . .

Using the word **will** shows that Marjorie and Bill are sure of their facts.

They also explain why they can expect these increases:

- due to the realignment of fences
- because of the improved water supply.

The words **due to** and **because of** show the relationship between the result (more production) and the cause (new fences and improved water supply).

Of course, they also have to provide details of the cost of the project and the loans they have taken out:

Department of Primary Industries and Energy

Productivity Enhancement Proposal - Part 2

Development: Fencing, pipes, troughs and tanks

Total Cost: $50 000

Loans: $50 000

Own resources: nil

Details of loans for which subsidy assistance requested:

[here they write the name of the lender, the amount, the type of loan and the interest rate].

Reproduced with permission from the Department of Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry.

Michael and Christine are making some improvements to their pastures. To help them afford it, they are applying for a subsidy.

They sit down and discuss the plans:

We need to sow some winter pasture with annual rye grass.
Yes it will grow quickly and provide some feed in winter.
We'll need to pay for the ploughing and sowing, the seed and the fertiliser, plus freight.
Twenty hectares, let me see, that'll be $7000.
We'll have 25% more dry matter feed over the next 12 months.

Activity 8

Now complete the relevant parts of the form for Michael and Christine:

Department of Primary Industries and Energy

Productivity Enhancement Proposal

1. What project is being undertaken to increase the productivity and/or efficiency of your farm business?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. What is the expected gain in production and when will it be achieved?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Reproduced with permission from the Department of Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry.

People involved in landcare groups may also apply for funding to assist with their projects. They may apply to the Landcare Protection Incentive Scheme (LPIS) funded by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE).

The LPIS funds landcare groups for projects such as:

- establishing perennial pasture
- tree planting in high priority areas
- fencing assistance for wetlands and native vegetation.

To receive funding, applicants have to say what they will do, and the effect it will have.

Members of Tamura Landcare Group are seeking funding to protect local wetlands. This is what they plan to do:

We can put up fences to keep stock out.
The drains are dumping water into the wetlands - we need to block them.
We can plant some more trees there.
Yes - indigenous trees.
That will assist in regeneration of a lot of species of plants, animals and birds.
Our wetlands are part of a corridor so this project will help the whole region.
Healthy wetlands may bring more visitors to the area.

Activity 9

Using the information from the members of the Tamura Landcare Group write an application for funding to protect the local wetlands. Remember the application should state what the group is going to do and how this will improve the area.

Land Protection Incentive Scheme

Proposal for funding

1. Give an outline of the project proposal.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. State what you believe the project will achieve in land protection and improvement.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Women and farm management

There are many women who own or run farms all over Australia. However, women's contribution to agriculture is often overlooked.

As Clare, a farmer and rural leader, puts it: "Some people think that all country women can do is make scones!"

Ruth is co-owner of a farm in south west Victoria. She is very involved in the running of the property.

Ruth would like to learn more about management and leadership but she doesn't know where to start.

Is there a group of rural women leaders I can join?
How can I afford to do a management and leadership course?
What skills do I need to develop?
Who can I contact?

Activity 10

1. Ruth sees the following article in a newspaper. Read it and find the answers to her questions. You can mark the answers with a highlighter.

Reading skills: highlighting

It is useful to use a highlighter to mark important information in an article. If you look at the article again, you will easily see the parts that interest you.

Page 4

Gates open up for farming women

It has been hard for women to get practical advice about rural leadership. The old problems that have prevented women from reaching high positions have continued to hold back talented women.

Women have made some progress against discrimination. But they still face never-ending chores, family commitments and the battle with money. Perhaps the worst problem is isolation.

A lack of access to new technology such as the Internet, increases in petrol prices and cuts to public transport mean many rural families are even more isolated now than in the past.

One group of rural women in south-west Victoria is working hard to change this situation. Formed eight years ago with the help of Glenormiston College, the SW Rural Women's Development group has made steady progress in bringing change to the lives of rural women.

The group holds regular seminars focussing on farm and organisation skills, confidence and leadership qualities.

The efforts of three group members have been recognised by the state government and they have received Rural Women's Leadership Bursaries.

The bursaries are a joint project of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment and the Department of Justice.

One winner, Anne Moore, said the bursaries were a good opportunity for women to attend leadership courses that were usually beyond the reach of farming women. "Many of these courses cost thousands of dollars and most rural women simply would not spend that amount of money on themselves," she said. "This is a great encouragement to get out and do a course."

Judy Logan said women who participated in groups such as the SW Rural Women's Development Group had a greater chance of becoming further involved in their industry. They could serve on industry boards and other key positions in agriculture.

Judy, a prime lamb, beef and dairy producer, said the group also offered women the chance to gain organisational skills and the confidence to step out and say what they thought, as well as take some action on an issue.

With the bursary, Judy will complete a leadership course at the Australian Institute of Management.

For more information on the SW Rural Women's Development Group, contact Louise on (03) 5557 8207.

By Monica Jackson, the Weekly Times 20 August 1997.

Reprinted courtesy of The Herald and Weekly Times

2. Complete the following sentences any way you like. You can use the information in the article, but you do not have to copy from the article.

   - In the past, farming women

   - Today, many farming women are involved in

   - Development groups can help women to

Meetings

Meetings are an important part of work and community life. Farmers may go to Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) meetings, landcare meetings, commodity group meetings, co-op meetings, school council meetings to name just a few. Unfortunately, sometimes meetings can be boring and not achieve much!

In this section we will look at some of the written and spoken communication skills needed in meetings.

meetings

agenda

chairperson

minutes

motion

vote

secretary

amendment

Activity 11

Match the key words with these definitions. Write the correct word next to each definition.

1. A list of the meeting's business

2. A proposal for action

3. A change to a motion

4. A written record of what happens

5. The person who conducts (runs) the meeting

6. The person who prepares the agenda and keeps minutes

7. Make decisions by saying "yes" or "no" to a motion

What is an agenda?

Agendas are usually distributed before a meeting. Their function is to let everyone know what will be discussed, so they can come prepared. There can be a time-frame for each item.

Example: agenda

Agenda

Wagunyip VFF branch
monthly meeting

Date: 4th August 1997
Time: 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Location: St John's Church Hall, Wagunyip

Order of business

1. Opening of meeting
2. Apologies
3. Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting (copy attached)
4. Business arising from minutes
5. Correspondence
6. Business arising from correspondence
7. Reports from representatives to Pastoral, Dairy and Grains groups
8. Forthcoming Farm$mart events
9. El Nino television link-up
10. Council zoning and subdivision
11. Other business
12. Close of meeting

What are the minutes?

At the meeting, it is the secretary's job to take minutes. This does not mean writing down everything that was said. The secretary records only who was present, what decisions were made, and what action is required.

Example: minutes

Minutes

Wagunyip VFF
branch monthly meeting
4th August 1997

Present: Melissa Baxter (chair), Peter Hill, Maria Pappas, Joe Henderson, Ken Shine, Kel Hunt, Scott Edwards, Wayne Free, Norm Drury, Karen Dean, Clinton Sanderson

Apologies: Tom Eliot, Pete Porter, Sylvia Woolf

1. Minutes of last meeting accepted.
2. Business arising from minutes. Nil.
3. Correspondence received: a letter from the VFF Industrial and Legal division outlining the changes to Federal Unfair Dismissal laws was circulated for members information.

   Correspondence sent: Letter to Ronald's Butchery thanking them for sponsorship.
4. Business arising from correspondence: that the branch organise an information and discussion day for members on the unfair dismissal laws.
5. Reports were received from the representatives to the Pastoral, Dairy and Grains groups. Reports attached.
6. Karen Dean confirmed that the next pasture nutrition day organised by Farm$mart and Target 10 will be held at Karen and Ted's farm on September 8th from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. There will be a pasture examination, cattle inspection and calculations. Please bring your notes from last time. Bring own lunch.

Page 1 of 2

7. Ken Shine informed the meeting about the forthcoming television link-up organised by the VFF on August 20th at 8 p.m. about the El Nino effect. VFF members can watch the broadcast live from Wagunyip High School and fax questions to the panel.

   Action: Make sure local members are informed about broadcast. Responsibility: All present

8. Maria Pappas raised the issue of local council zoning and subdivision changes which are causing concern to members.

   The branch will consult with Wagunyip council in relation to the proposed changes to zoning and subdivision.

9. Other business: Joe Henderson informed the meeting that Pat Cassidy is in hospital with a broken leg after tractor accident.

   That members will help out on Pat's farm until he is out of hospital.

   Action: Joe and Scott will go to Pat's place, talk to Maeve Cassidy and see what needs doing.

10. Meeting closed 10.15 p.m.

Chairperson's signature:

..... Date: .....

Secretary's signature:

..... Date: .....

If you want to find out more about meetings, you should look at the Rural Leadership module of the Rural Business Management course, published by Adelaide Institute of TAFE, or the Better Branches program published by the VFF.

Fruit industry tariffs

Here are some responses from fruit farmers who were interviewed about the government's tariff cuts in the fruit industry.

The tariff cuts have got to change. I can't afford to pick my fruit. I'll have to bulldoze my trees or go bankrupt.
It's a disgrace. Those donkeys in Canberra have got to think again. If they don't, my vote goes to the opposition.
They tell us to diversify. I haven't got $25 000 to plant a hectare of grapes.
Very few will survive. We were getting $120 a tonne before and now we're getting $25.
They're flooding the market with this cheap stuff from Brazil. What has happened to 'Buy Australian?"

If we pull out our trees, there's no work for the pickers. If there's no fruit picked, no jobs for the packers. The whole economy is affected.
We don't want handouts, we want to be treated equally. Give us the same level of support as the car and textile industries.

Anybody listening to them can hear exactly how they feel. The words they choose, the tones they use and the ideas they talk about show they disagree.

- They use strong words like disgrace, bankrupt and cheap stuff.
- They use words which appeal to people's feelings and sense of fairness, such as equally, handouts and survive.
- They repeat things to stress ideas - no work for pickers, no fruit picked, no work for the packers.

Activity 12

1. Order these statements. Which is the most strongly worded? Which is the least strongly worded?

   - "Times are tough."

     "I'm going to be ruined."

     "I'm losing money every crop I pick."

   - "These tariff cuts will bring down the Australian fruit industry."

     "These tariff cuts means it will be difficult to compete with overseas growers."

     "The government should think again about the tariff cuts."

2. How would you express these ideas more strongly? Try writing a stronger sentence for each one.

   - I disagree with the new tariff rate.

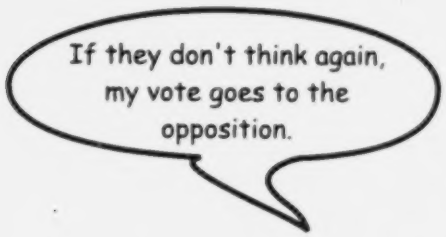
   - It's not right what's happening in the fruit industry.

   - It is not worth picking the fruit.

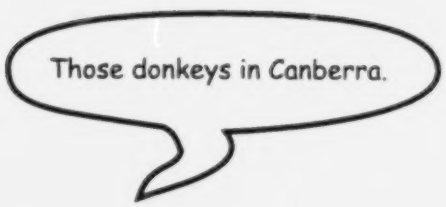
Expressing disagreement

It's not only the words the farmers use that show their concern. Notice the ways the farmers express their disagreement. Some:

- threaten

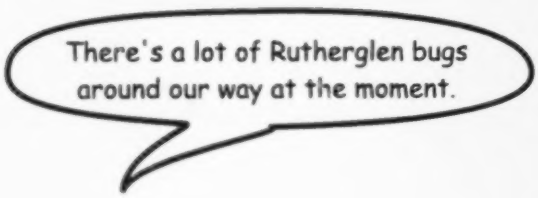


- abuse /insult



- refute (say why other people are wrong)

- point out the effects



- offer a solution

- quote figures

- appeal to the emotions of the listener

Activity 13

1. Which ways of arguing that are listed above do you find most effective?

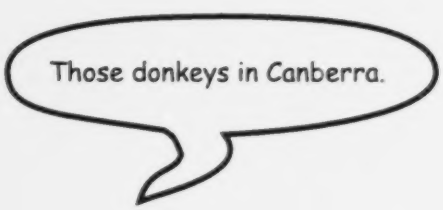
2. Why?

3. Which ways of arguing that are listed above do you find least effective?

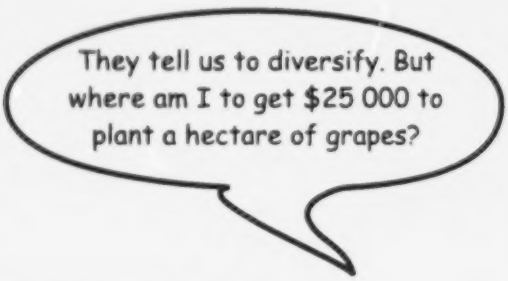
4. Why?

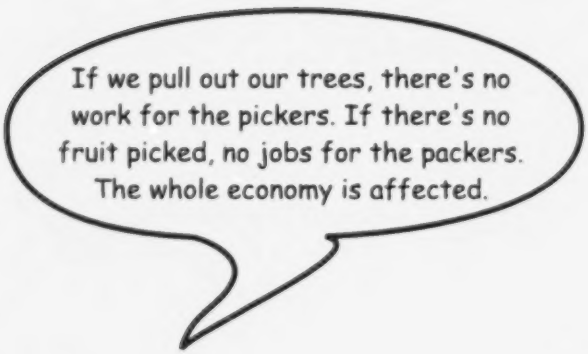
Making a point

When you make a point, it can be tempting to abuse people.

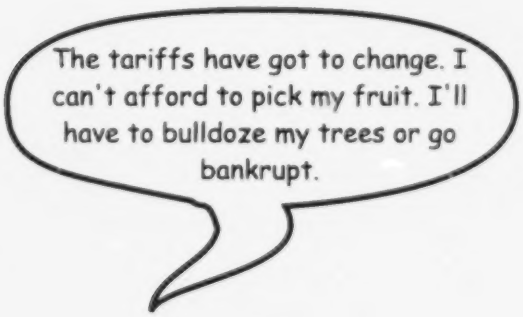


But rather than abusing the person you disagree with, whatever you think of them, it is better to say why you don't accept their view. This is called refuting an argument.

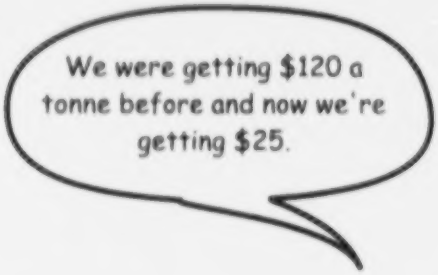



If we pull out our trees, there's no work for the pickers. If there's no fruit picked, no jobs for the packers. The whole economy is affected.

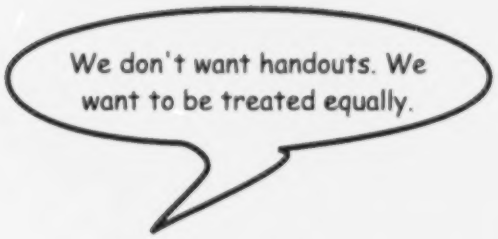
Once you have pointed out why you cannot accept their view, you can state your opinion.



Quoting facts or figures can help your argument.



Appealing to a sense of justice and fairness can also be used in an argument.



It makes good sense to offer a solution. You don't just knock back another opinion, but show that there is another way of doing things.

Activity 14

The following announcement appeared in daily newspapers recently.

Page 2

Government proposal

Under a new government proposal, all farmers will have to pay for food inspectors to come in and audit their farms each year. These audits will be used to check that every farm has a food safety plan and hygiene system.

1. What do you think of this?

2. How would you express your agreement/disagreement?

3. What reasons could you give to support your view?

4. If you are against the audits, can you suggest an alternative?

5. Suggest an alternative solution to yearly audits.

Formal letters

In *Farm Management 1* we looked at letters of inquiry. In this section we will look at some other common types of letters that farmers receive.

Example: formal letter

25th February, 1997

DJ Smith
Box 1234
Warracknabeal Vic 3393

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for your interest in growing barley this year, under contract for the Australian Barley Board.

Participation in this scheme requires the completion of the enclosed contract and information form, together with payment for seed required.

The ABB has available 50 kg bags of certified, graded and pickled seed. Price is $400 per tonne. The seed will be available from Wimmera stores. We will confirm these sites prior to the commencement of harvest.

Please include full payment for your seed when returning the enclosed forms. A receipt will subsequently be forwarded to you. Seed cannot be collected without a receipt.

Should you have any queries please contact our Melbourne office on (03) 329 5977.

Yours faithfully,

Australian Barley Board

Reproduced with the permission of the Australian Barley Board

Formal letters often include words that are not common in normal speech. In the example letter, the writer uses the words "a receipt will subsequently be forwarded to you" not "a receipt will then be sent to you."

When you write letters yourself, it is better to state what you want simply and clearly. Unfortunately, other people do not always write simple, clear letters so you need to know what formal words mean.

Activity 15

1. Here are some examples of key words often used in formal letters. The words are all in the letter from the Barley Board. Match each word with the right meaning.

formal letters

enclosed

forward

queries

prior to

commencement

as per

subsequently

ex

before

out of

questions

after

start

the same as

in this envelope

send

Reading practice

2. When you receive formal letters, add them to your file. Make a note of any formal words used in the letters.

Model answers

Activity 1

1. Able to make a profit *profitable*
2. The natural surroundings where people live *environment*
3. Chances to do things *opportunities*
4. Important things to do first *priorities*
5. How much the farm can produce *productivity*
6. Talks with people to reach an agreement *negotiations*
7. Able to continue *sustainable*
8. To fit in with a larger community *integrate*

Activity 3

Question 2

- The best *top quality*
- Put in trees *revegetate*
- Money left after tax *net income*
- No money to pay *debt free*

Activity 4

Question 1

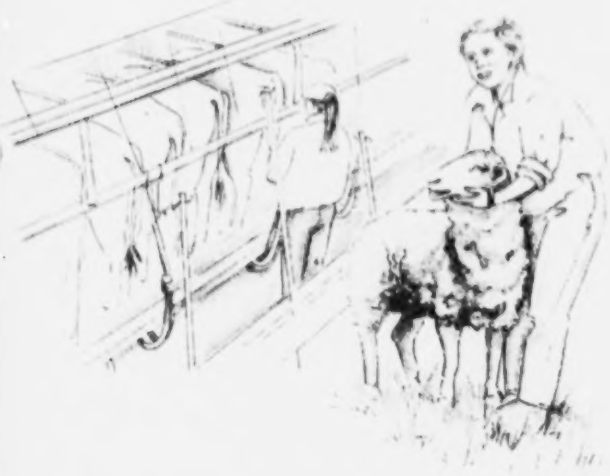
We own a *650 hectare farm*. Our business is *cows, sheep and chooks*. This provides us with an income of *$25 000*. We plan to *raise geese* next year. We also plan to *improve the farm buildings* over the next *three* years. We want to *sell up* in *10* years' time.

Activity 11

1. A list of the meeting's business *agenda*
2. A proposal for action *motion*
3. A change to a motion *amendment*
4. A written record of what happens *minutes*
5. The person who conducts (runs) the meeting *chairperson*
6. The person who prepares the agenda and keeps minutes *secretary*
7. Make decisions by saying "yes" or "no" to a motion *vote*

Farm Management and Leadership

Level 3



Support Materials for Agricultural Training

Acknowledgments

These units were developed as an initiative of the Victorian Farmers Federation and Primary Skills Victoria. They have been written and prepared by Kangan Batman TAFE.

Project Development Team:

Project Manager:	Barbara Goulborn
Writers:	Nick Gadd, Michele Lucas
Illustrations:	Tracey Lean
Graphics and Desktop Publishing:	Kelisha Dalton, Simon Colvey, Maryjeanne Watt, Betty Franklin
Editing:	Helen Yeates, Philip Kofoed, Angela Costi
Instructional design:	Elizabeth McInerney
Reviewers:	Rob Tabener, Wimmera Rural Counselling Service
Series reviewer:	Malcolm Trainor, Instructor, Agricultural Education Centre, University of Ballarat

Project Steering Committee:

Clare Claydon:	Victorian Farmers Federation, 1997
Airlie Worral:	Victorian Farmers Federation
Lyn Hughes:	Primary Skills Victoria
John Nicholls:	Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs
Tony Audley:	United Diary Farmers of Victoria
Ken Stone:	Victorian Farmers Federation, industry representative
Colin Hunt:	Victorian Farmers Federation, industry representative
Margaret Brodie:	Victorian Farmers Federation, industry representative
Michael Kearney:	Victorian Farmers Federation, industry representative
Nickie Berrisford:	Grain Industry Training Network
Andrew Sullivan:	Agricultural Education Centre, University of Ballarat
Malcolm Trainor:	Agricultural Education Centre, University of Ballarat

Published and distributed by:
The Language Australia National Resource Centre
Language Australia
GPO Box 372F, Melbourne Victoria 3001
Telephone: (03) 9926 4779
Facsimile: (03) 9926 4780
Email: lanrc@la.ames.vic.edu.au

© 1998 Commonwealth of Australia.

Funded under the Workplace English Language and Literacy Programme by the Commonwealth through the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

Contents

Introduction 1

- Where this fits 1
- How to use these materials 1
- Outcomes 2
- How long should I spend? 2
- Activities 2
- What you need 3
- Assessment 3

Sustainable property plans 4

Working with others 6

Talking quality 10

- Group problem solving 11

Marketing your produce 17

- Stick to the facts 18
- Going to the marketplace 19

Mission statements and objectives 21

Social issues 24

- Letters about an issue 26
- Write what the problem is 28
- Give more details and information 29
- Your solution to the problem 31

Model answers 38

- Activity 11 38
- Activity 12 39
- Activity 13 40

Introduction

Welcome to this unit of the SMAT materials, *Farm Management and Leadership 3*.

SMAT stands for Support Materials for Agricultural Training. SMAT will help you improve your written and spoken communication skills and your numeracy skills, so you can succeed at training programs or communicate more successfully in your workplace.

This unit helps you with the reading, writing and spoken communication skills you need to deal with farm management and leadership. This unit is not a course in farm management and leadership, but it will support you if you do a course in farm management and leadership.

Where this fits

SMAT has four topics: *Agricultural Production, Farmers as Employers, Farm Management and Leadership* and *Occupational Health and Safety*.

This unit is Level 3 of *Farm Management and Leadership*. There are three units of *Farm Management and Leadership*: Level 1 (starting), 2 (continuing) and 3 (completing). Each unit has two parts: Communication Skills and Numeracy.

After you finish this unit, you could try the other units at the same level: *Agricultural Production 3, Farmers as Employers 3, Occupational Health and Safety 3*.

You do not have to complete every unit in SMAT. It is up to you to choose the most useful parts and work through them.

How to use these materials

You can use the SMAT materials by yourself, with someone to help you, or in a group or class. It is hard to work by yourself, so it is a good idea to have someone who can give you advice and feedback (a mentor). This person could be a trainer from a college or community centre, a relative, a neighbour or a friend.

The unit is written so you can start at the beginning and work through it. Or if you like you can choose parts of the unit and only do those parts. Spend more time on the parts which are most useful for you. If something is not useful, you can skip it.

There is no certificate to go with the SMAT materials. But SMAT helps you improve your skills so you can do other courses and get other certificates. For example: FarmSmart, Rural Business Management, and courses run by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment. You will also find that working through SMAT improves the communication and numeracy skills that you need in your working life.

Outcomes

After you finish the SMAT materials you will be able to communicate more effectively in speech and writing and use numeracy skills more effectively. You will be able to write formal letters and develop a mission statement.

How long should I spend?

This depends on you. The amount of time will be different if you are working by yourself or in a group, with a mentor or without, and if you do all the activities or not. Take enough time to do all the activities that are relevant to you, to a standard high enough to satisfy you.

Activities

Each unit has a number of activities for you to do. In the communications units there are four types of activities:

- key word activities
- reading activities
- writing activities
- spoken communication activities.

In the numeracy units there are numeracy activities.

Sometimes you can write answers to these activities in the book. Sometimes it is better to write them in a notebook. Sometimes for the spoken communication activities you will need to go and speak to some other people.

In some places there are also practice writing and practice reading activities. These are extra activities. You can choose to do them if you think you want extra practice in something.

Most of the activities have model answers in the back of the book. You can also ask your mentor to check your answers.

What you need

Before you start, make sure you have the following:

- a notebook (A4 size is best)
- pens, pencils, highlighter pens
- a file or folder to keep extra papers.

Assessment

There is no formal assessment for SMAT. But it is a good idea to have a mentor look at what you have done. That way you can decide together what you have learned and what you need to improve.

Remember, the SMAT materials are a resource for you to use to improve your skills. It is up to you how you use them and how much of them you use.

Sustainable property plans

If you want to know more about whole farm plans look at *Farm Management and Leadership 2.*

Margaret and Ron have a traditional grain and sheep farm in western Victoria. They decide to change their farm management. Ron and Margaret will continue to look for new ways of improving farm productivity but will give more importance to conservation farming practices.

They decide to discuss their options and write a sustainable farm management plan. Later they will use this written plan along with the aerial photo of their farm to produce a detailed, long term property management plan.

This is what they decide for now - of course, they can always change it later.

We need to plant some idigenous native trees to act as windbreaks.
Instead of draining the old swamp, let's keep it as a wetland area.
We should diversify our crops - we could try growing some grain legumes. That will protect us if wheat prices drop.
Let's give minimum tillage a go in the top paddock. If it works, we can use it in all of them.
We need to rotate our crops more to reduce disease.
We can apply for Landcare funding to help us pay for some of this.

Activity 1

Using this information, write a whole farm plan for Margaret and Ron.

Writing practice

Think about your own farm. With the help of other family members and/or staff, decide what conservation strategies need to be included in your farm plan. You may want to rewrite your existing plan, or start a completely new farm management plan. List here the minor changes you decide to make:

Working with others

Farmers can often achieve more by working together with others than by working individually.

Activity 2

What can groups of farmers achieve when they work together? Write some ideas here:

Co-operative groups and associations do not have to be large. In fact, small groups are often more effective because everyone can be more involved.

Here are two examples of farmers working together.

Case study: Landcare groups

In the Corangamite area there are many Landcare groups. The groups provide forums for discussions of better farming and a community approach to tasks that would be beyond families acting alone. The groups have tackled salinity, improved pastures, established native vegetation and developed more sustainable farming practices.

Case study: free-range egg farmers

In 1993 a group of six farmers who produced free-range eggs formed the Free-Range Egg and Poultry Association of Victoria. They have established a code of practice for the industry which will pass into law. Many other free-range egg farmers have joined the association and are receiving advice about production, Quality Assurance and marketing.

Here are some key words. What do you understand by these words?

Quality Assurance

Code of practice

If you are not sure of the meaning of these key words, look at the next case study.

Case study: Wodonga goat farmers

In the Wodonga region there is a group of farmers who are interested in producing goats. These farmers meet together regularly. Mike, an agriculture trainer from the local TAFE College, describes the process:

"A few local farmers were interested in producing goats, so we suggested getting together and talking about developing the industry. At the first meeting there were 15 farmers, who all knew other farmers interested in producing goats. We started by talking about the potential of goats, and the possibility of producing meat, milk and cheese.

"In later sessions we moved on to talking about the best ways of producing goats. Everyone shared their experience and ideas, and it turned out that people were doing things very differently. Soon we realised that we need to have proper standards that apply to every farmer. If Jean is producing high quality product, she wants to know that Joe down the road is doing the same, or the whole industry will suffer."

"We decided that if we want to have a successful industry, we must make sure that everyone is producing high quality product. Export markets like Japan won't take our product unless we can prove that it is good quality all the way along the line. Soon we were talking about Quality Assurance and establishing a code of practice for the industry."

Quality Assurance means a process of making sure at every stage that you are producing a quality product. For example, the goat farmers need to keep careful records of what they feed their goats, when they drench them and vaccinate them, their health, and how they are handled. As Mike says: "Export markets are looking for clean and green - and they want proof of it!"

Many farmers think keeping records is a nuisance, but there are several ways to do it. For example you can use a notebook, or you can keep a whiteboard and a marker in the shed where you do the drenching. Or you can carry a small tape recorder and speak into it, then you or someone else can write your recording up later.

Code of practice means writing down the right ways of doing things. Everyone who belongs to the group has to follow the code of practice. For example, the free-range egg farmers in the first example must agree only to have free-range hens and no battery hens on their farms. They must also put the eggs in new boxes, not second-hand boxes.

Activity 3

Reading practice

Do you belong to any groups, co-ops or associations? If so, do these groups have a code of practice, and do you have a copy? Obtain and read the code of practice if you have not already done so.

Is there a Quality Assurance process in your industry? What do you do to make sure you are providing quality? Obtain and read a copy of your industry's Quality Assurance procedures.

If your group does not have a code of practice or quality procedures, then maybe you should think about what should be included.

Talking quality

In *Farm Management and Leadership 2*, you looked at how brainstorming can help groups make decisions. This time the case study involves cattle farmers looking at how to get more people involved in Quality Assurance in their industry.

But first think about your own approach to problem solving.

Activity 4

Think about a problem you have had to tackle at your workplace lately.

- What was the problem?
- How did you try to solve it?
- Did you solve it?

Case study: QA in the beef industry

Global markets demand quality beef. Local consumers, wholesalers and processors are also asking for evidence that beef meets their quality standards. To meet this market push, farmers are being urged to introduce Quality Assurance processes and record keeping on their farms. While some farmers in the cattle industry have participated in Quality Assurance training days, very few have applied to be accredited as quality producers.

A group of farmers met to discuss this problem which could have serious effects on Australia's beef export markets.

Group problem solving

There are different approaches to group problem solving. However, whichever method you use you should make sure that those involved in the discussion:

- are committed to solving the problem
- have relevant knowledge of the problem.

Group problem solving

Here are the steps taken by the cattle farmers. This is one approach often used in group problem solving.

1. Define the problem.
2. Identify the end goal.
3. Define limits.
4. Brainstorm solutions.
5. Select the best solution.
6. Plan action.

1. Define the problem

Before you can solve a problem, you have to define it. The group needs to decide:

- What is the problem?
- How widespread is the problem?
- Who is affected by the problem?
- What is the cause of the problem?

This is what the cattle farmers said.

If we don't introduce Quality Assurance we won't have many markets to sell to.
Quality Assurance doesn't have anything to do with the taste of a good steak!
I can't stand all this paperwork.
We may not like it but it will help our exports. The Japanese want it.
How many have applied to be accredited?
We're only part of a whole chain. Our animals go to the abattoir and then they're mixed in with other animals and we can't control how they're handled then.

2. Identify your goal

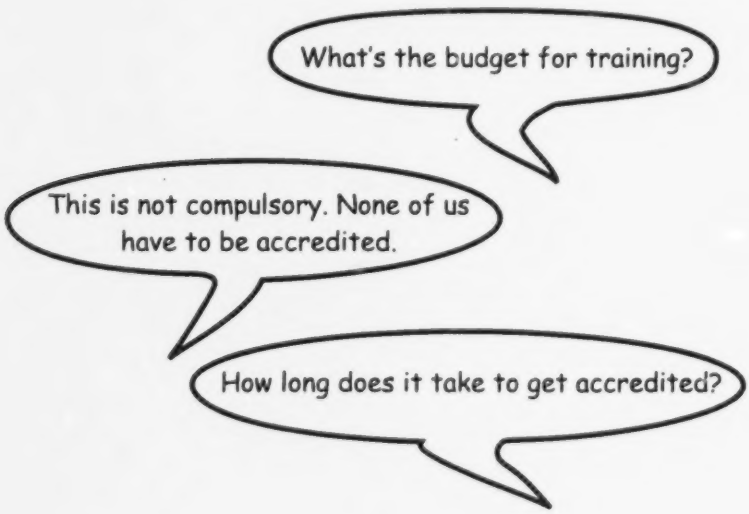
Before trying to solve the problem you need to agree on the goal you want to achieve. That means deciding what you are aiming at. In other words you need to decide how you will know the problem has been solved.

This is how the cattle farmers defined their goal.

We need at least 70% of local producers to have quality procedures on their farms. Anything less means that the image of the whole group will suffer.

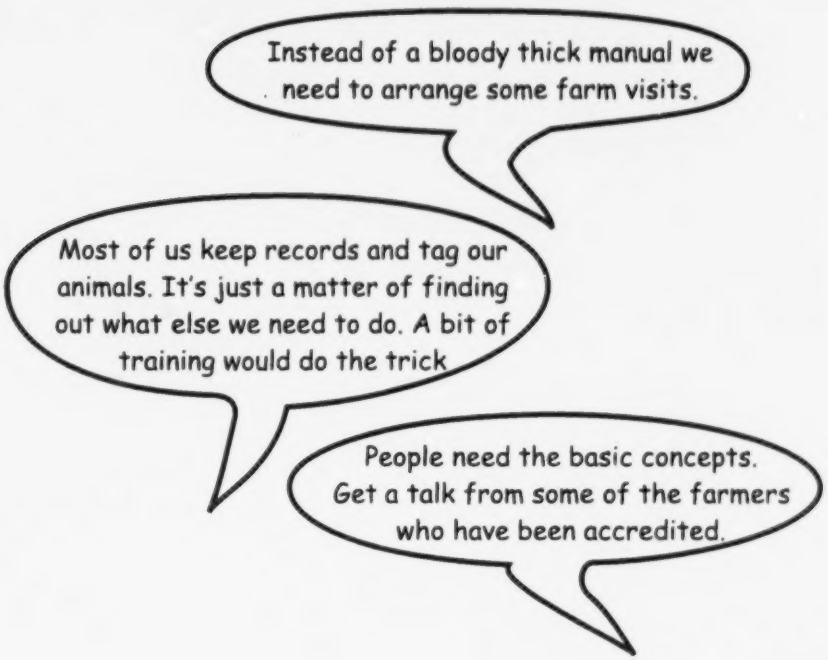
3. Define limits

The next step is to look at the limits to solutions. Are you limited by budget, time or other things. Knowing what limits exist help the group to come up with realistic solutions.


What's the budget for training?
This is not compulsory. None of us have to be accredited.
How long does it take to get accredited?

4. Brainstorm solutions

Now you know your limits, the group can brainstorm different solutions. The more ideas the better. The group does not need to evaluate the ideas, but just compile as many solutions as possible.

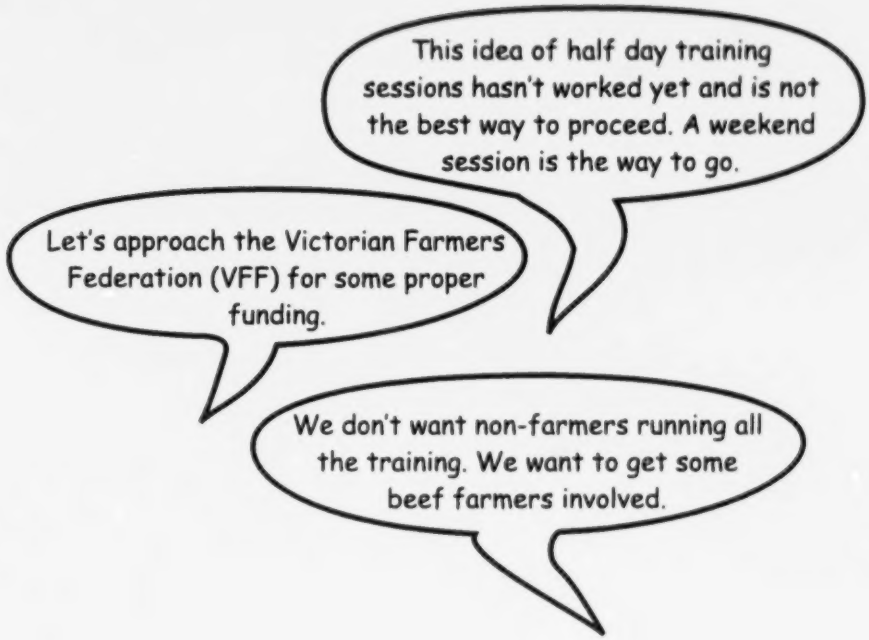

Instead of a bloody thick manual we need to arrange some farm visits.
Most of us keep records and tag our animals. It's just a matter of finding out what else we need to do. A bit of training would do the trick
People need the basic concepts. Get a talk from some of the farmers who have been accredited.

5. Select the best solution

When all the suggested solutions have been listed, the group evaluates the ideas and decides on the best alternative. Discussion is vital here. The reasons for and against each solution should be looked at. The group needs to ask:

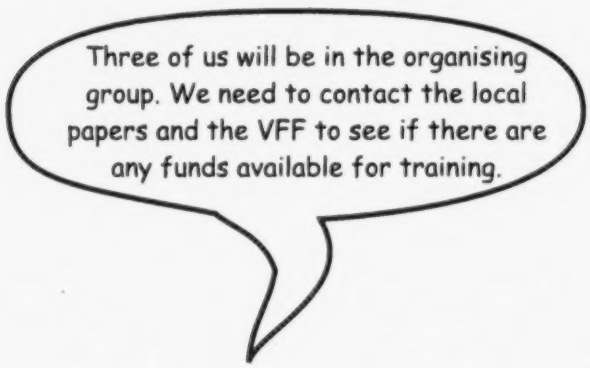
- Is this realistic?
- Will this solution help achieve our goal?

While a vote is a quick way to get agreement, a close result can mean that all group members are not satisfied with the outcome. It is better for groups to reach consensus through discussion.


This idea of half day training sessions hasn't worked yet and is not the best way to proceed. A weekend session is the way to go.
Let's approach the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) for some proper funding.
We don't want non-farmers running all the training. We want to get some beef farmers involved.

6. Plan action

The final thing the group needs to decide is how the solution will be put in place. What needs to be done? Who will do what? When does it need to be done?


Three of us will be in the organising group. We need to contact the local papers and the VFF to see if there are any funds available for training.

The steps involved in this example apply to all problem solving. They are equally useful solving problems alone or working in a group.

Activity 5

1. Think back to the earlier problem in the last activity.

   - When you tried to solve it, did you include any of the steps followed by the cattle farmers?
   - Would following this process have helped you solve the problem more effectively?

2. For this activity pretend that you have a problem with drainage in one of your paddocks. Go through the problem solving process, find your solutions.

   1. Define the problem
   2. Identify the end goal
   3. Identify limits
   4. Brainstorm solutions
   5. Select best solution
   6. Plan action.

Marketing your produce

A produce agent talking about the role of farmers in marketing their produce said, "Marketing has changed dramatically in the last 15 years. Back then farmers dealt directly with their buyers, now there is a long chain from grower to buyer."

Some individual producers sell their produce to agents, who then market it to buyers such as supermarket chains or overseas buyers. Other producers are part of cooperatives who employ people to market their products. Some large producers market their own produce.

Case study: apples

Fin, an apple grower, sells his produce to an apple and pear agent in Queensland. He deals directly with the agents, contacting them before the fruit is picked. A price is negotiated and the agent then sells to a large supermarket chain. All this is done over the telephone and via fax.

The agent provides Fin with feedback from the buyers about the quantity and varieties they will need in future. Recently the supermarket chain decided that the Sundowner variety were selling better than Croftons. Such information lets growers forward plan and allows them to provide products that consumers want.

Case study: shedded sheep

Ros raises shedded sheep. The wool produced is valued for its high quality and is exported to Italy. Prior to shearing, Ros has the wool from each sheep sampled to test its fineness. She also contacts her agent to inform them about the test results and amount of clip available. The agent then promotes the product among prospective buyers.

After shearing, the wool is baled and sent to auction. While Ros can specify the reserve price there are no negotiations before auction.

Last year the agent arranged for the Italian buyers to visit Ros' farm. She spoke directly with the buyers and had the opportunity to discuss their quality requirements and inform them about how this fine micron wool is produced.

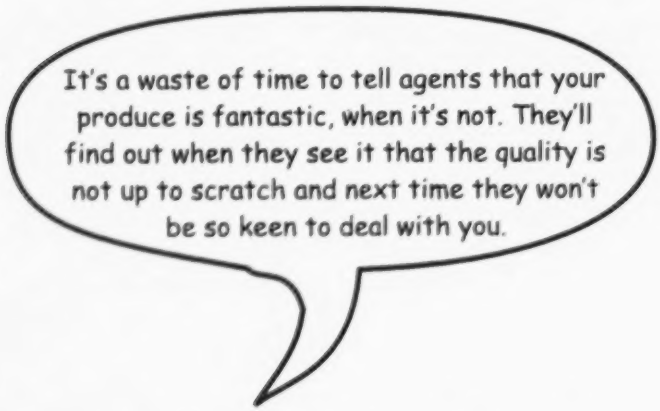
Activity 6

1. How is your produce marketed?

2. What is your involvement in the marketing process?

Stick to the facts

A produce agent from Queensland gives farmers the following advice. He says that growers are their own enemies when they promise the crop they are sending is top quality when it's not. All this means is that the next time the agent is approached the grower will not be believed or will be offered a lower price.


It's a waste of time to tell agents that your produce is fantastic, when it's not. They'll find out when they see it that the quality is not up to scratch and next time they won't be so keen to deal with you.

The agent says he wants to know:

- the produce and varieties available
- the quantity for sale
- the quality (for example, grain protein level).

Before you talk to agents you should do some research to find out the volume of your crop or produce available both here and overseas and what buyers want.

This information changes seasonally and so you need to do this research regularly.

You can get this information from:

- other farmers and growers
- farming groups.

If you are negotiating a price, you need to be prepared. Before you meet or telephone the agents, decide:

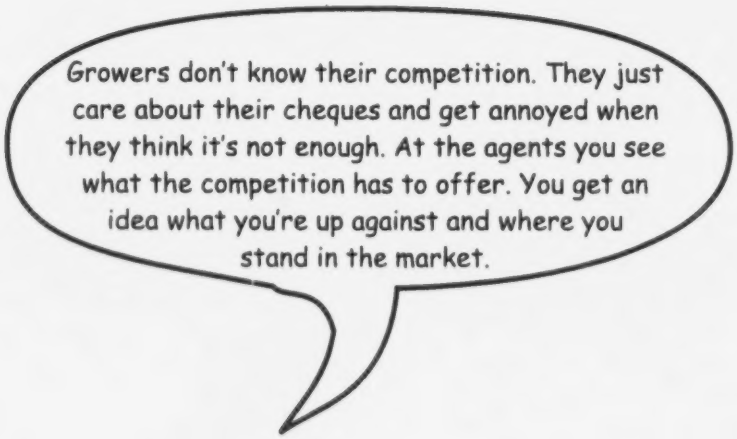
- what you will ask for
- what you will accept.

If you are not offered the price you expect, you may need to contact other agents. This may mean you have not valued the crop or produce correctly or the agent is not offering enough.

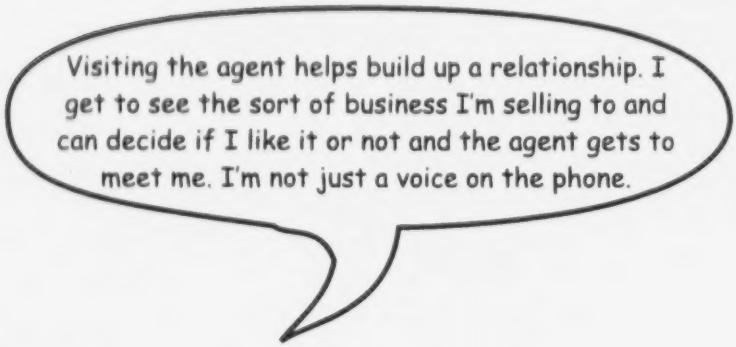
Going to the marketplace

Another way of researching the market is to go directly to the warehouse, the auction or the agent's stores to see for yourself what happens to your produce and what else is for sale.

Fin, an apple grower, says:


Growers don't know their competition. They just care about their cheques and get annoyed when they think it's not enough. At the agents you see what the competition has to offer. You get an idea what you're up against and where you stand in the market.

The face-to-face approach pays off. According to Fin:


Visiting the agent helps build up a relationship. I get to see the sort of business I'm selling to and can decide if I like it or not and the agent gets to meet me. I'm not just a voice on the phone.

Activity 7

Evaluate Fin's advice. Do you think the personal approach works?

Mission statements and objectives

Groups such as associations or co-ops often spend time talking about what they are doing and what they want to do. When they have agreed on these matters, it is important to write them down so the group has a record of them. They are called mission statements and objectives.

The purpose of the mission statement and objectives is to state why the group exists and what it intends to achieve.

Here is an example mission statement and objectives of Rare Breeds Victoria. Read it and find out why the group exists, what it does, and what it intends to achieve.

Mission Statement

To ensure the survival of endangered farm livestock.

Objectives

- To encourage the breeding of endangered farm animals.
- To conserve breed standards as recognised by the breed organisations.
- To develop commodity markets for these animals.
- To establish a fund for research and development.
- To develop an accreditation system and a code of ethics.
- To create public awareness of the plight of rare breeds and the implications of their loss to Australian/World Agriculture.
- To develop an organisation profile.
- To set measurable and achievable long and short-term goals for each of the objectives set.

Let's go back to the goat farmer's group. This group has some ideas about why they exist and what they want to achieve. They decide to write a mission statement and objectives.

Here are their ideas:

We need to develop a strong goat industry in Victoria.
I think we should try to increase the goat population.
Yes, with all our products top quality.
It's important to share ideas about the best ways of doing things.
Yes, communication is very important.
We have to find out where we can export our products.
We need a code of practice for the industry.

Activity 8

Use this information to write a mission statement and objectives for the group. Use the Rare Breeds examples to help you. Have the goat farmers forgotten anything? If you like, add some more ideas of your own.

Reading practice

If you belong to a small group or association, obtain a copy of the group's mission statement and objectives. If they do not exist, you could get involved in writing them.

Social issues

In this section we will look at how farmers and other country people can get involved in important social and political issues, organise people and make things happen.

Activity 9

A lot of social issues are important to people living in the country. What are some social issues that are important to you? Make a list of your ideas here:

The VFF Social Policy group sent out a questionnaire to members, asking for their views on various issues. Members were asked to say what they thought were the most important issues and number them from 1 to 10. The questionnaire is below.

Activity 10

Complete the questionnaire by numbering what you think are the ten most important issues from 1 to 10.

Rural Issues Questionnaire

Closure or downgrading of rural hospitals	.....
Closure or amalgamation of rural schools	.....
Closure of passenger rail lines	.....
Deterioration of rural roads	.....
Lack of resources to control the spread of vermin and noxious weeds	.....
Government taxes on fuels	.....
Decline in services provided by local government following amalgamations	.....
Local government rates on farm land	.....
The large disparity between city and country petrol prices	.....
Gun control regulations	.....
Proposals to increase farm truck registration charges	.....
Landcare/natural resource management issues	.....
Assistance provided through rural adjustment scheme	.....
Availability of banking services in rural towns	.....
Port/waterfront reform	.....
Industrial relations issues	.....
Price and availability of irrigation water	.....
Prices received for beef and the price consumers pay for red meat	.....
Downgrading of the service provided by the Department of Agriculture	.....
Lack of jobs in country areas for young people	.....
Health services provision, dental and mental health	.....
Animal health issues, privatisation of regional veterinary labs	.....

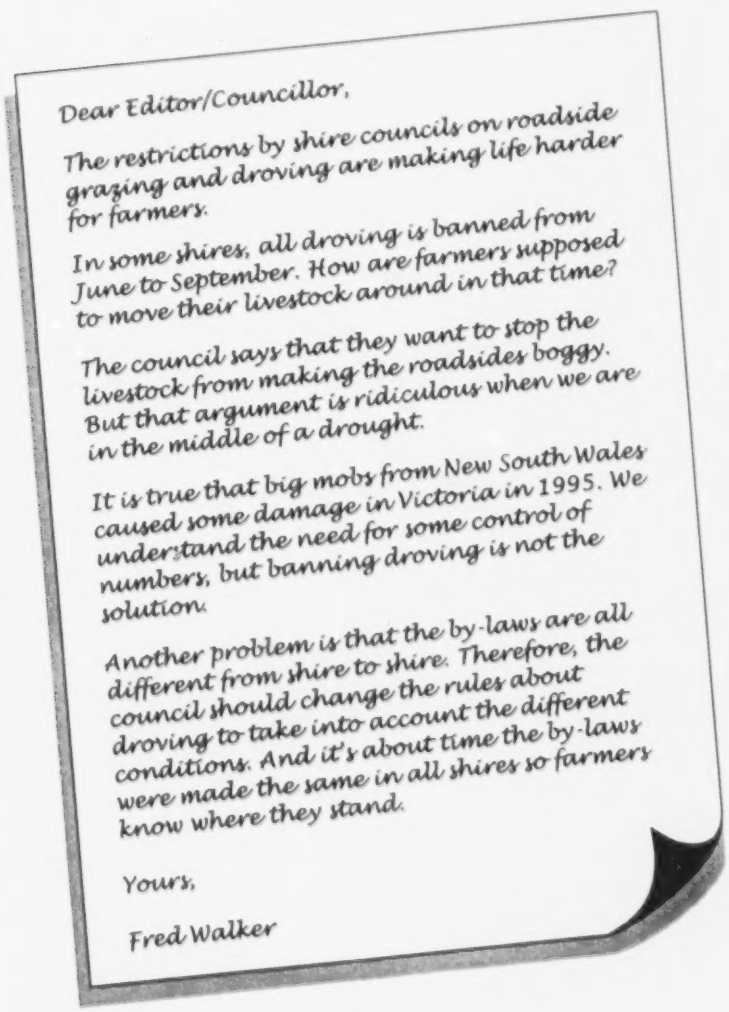
Reproduced with permission from Victorian Farmers Federation

Letters about an issue

There are lots of arguments and controversies in the farming world. For example: tariffs, government assistance, tax, services. Many people have different opinions about these issues.

Sometimes you may want to say or write what you think about an issue. You may for example call a radio talkback program, attend a public meeting, or write a letter to a Member of Parliament or to a newspaper.

Here is an example of a letter about an issue. A letter like this could be sent to the council or to a local newspaper.



Dear Editor/Councillor,

The restrictions by shire councils on roadside grazing and droving are making life harder for farmers.

In some shires, all droving is banned from June to September. How are farmers supposed to move their livestock around in that time?

The council says that they want to stop the livestock from making the roadsides boggy. But that argument is ridiculous when we are in the middle of a drought.

It is true that big mobs from New South Wales caused some damage in Victoria in 1995. We understand the need for some control of numbers, but banning droving is not the solution.

Another problem is that the by-laws are all different from shire to shire. Therefore, the council should change the rules about droving to take into account the different conditions. And it's about time the by-laws were made the same in all shires so farmers know where they stand.

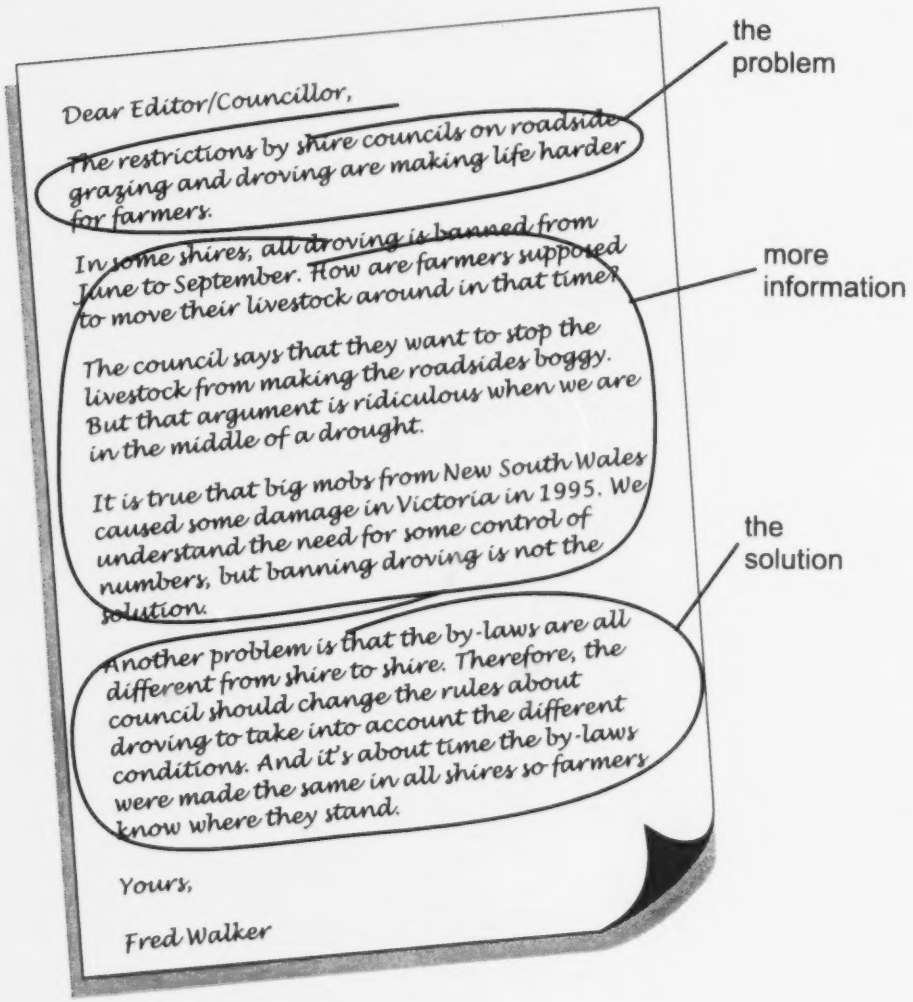
Yours,

Fred Walker

Letters about an issue are organised like this:

- First you write what the problem is.
- Then you give more details and information about the problem.
- Last you write your solution to the problem.

Here are the three stages marked on the letter:


Dear Editor/Councillor,
The restrictions by shire councils on roadside grazing and droving are making life harder for farmers.
In some shires, all droving is banned from June to September. How are farmers supposed to move their livestock around in that time?
The council says that they want to stop the livestock from making the roadsides boggy. But that argument is ridiculous when we are in the middle of a drought.
It is true that big mobs from New South Wales caused some damage in Victoria in 1995. We understand the need for some control of numbers, but banning droving is not the solution.
Another problem is that the by-laws are all different from shire to shire. Therefore, the council should change the rules about droving to take into account the different conditions. And it's about time the by-laws were made the same in all shires so farmers know where they stand.
Yours,
Fred Walker
the problem
more information
the solution

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Write what the problem is

One sentence is often enough to state the problem. It is important to be very clear and specific. For example, in a letter about schools, don't just say, "The government doesn't care about the bush". This is too broad. Say something more specific like, "The closure of the primary school shows that the State government doesn't care about education in the bush".

Here are some sentences you can use:

I was disappointed/ angry to hear that. . .

The government's/ bank's/ company's/ Federation's policy of . . . is misguided/ mistaken.

. . . is going to cause a lot of problems in the community.

. . . is making life harder for farmers/ people in the bush/ rural communities.

Of course, you are not always complaining! Maybe you want to say the government or Federation is doing the right thing:

I was pleased to hear that . . .

Congratulations to the Federation on its success in . . .

The government's/ company's/ Federation's policy . . .

. . .is going to improve the situation for country communities.

. . . is a step in the right direction.

It's a good idea to mention "the community" because it shows that you are not just thinking about yourself. Don't say, for example, "Closing the bank causes a lot of problems for me." Say, "Closing the bank will make life more difficult for the whole local community." In Fred's letter, he says the rules about droving make life harder for all farmers, not just himself.

Give more details and information

In the middle of the letter, give information and arguments that support your point of view. These need to be short, snappy, and relevant. Don't go on at great length.

You can link your points together with words like this:

also. . .

Another point is. . .

Another problem is. . .

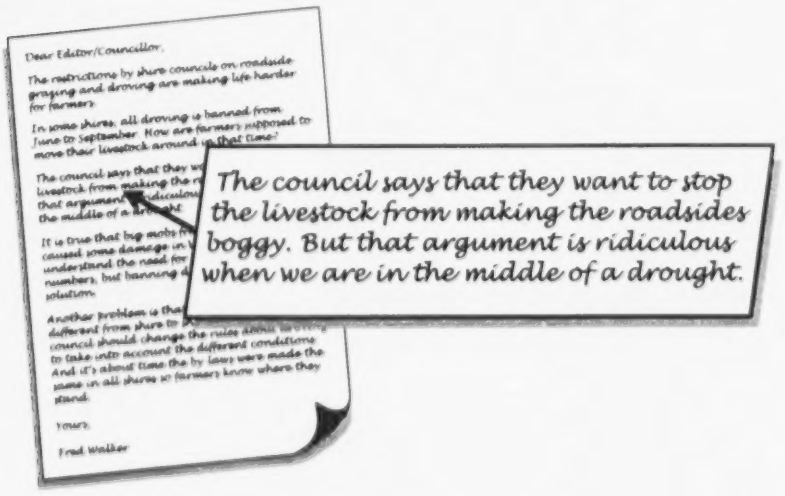
If you like, you can also put your points in a sequence by saying:

first. . .

second. . .

third. . .

Another good idea is to show that you can see both sides of the issue. Look at this part of Fred's letter:

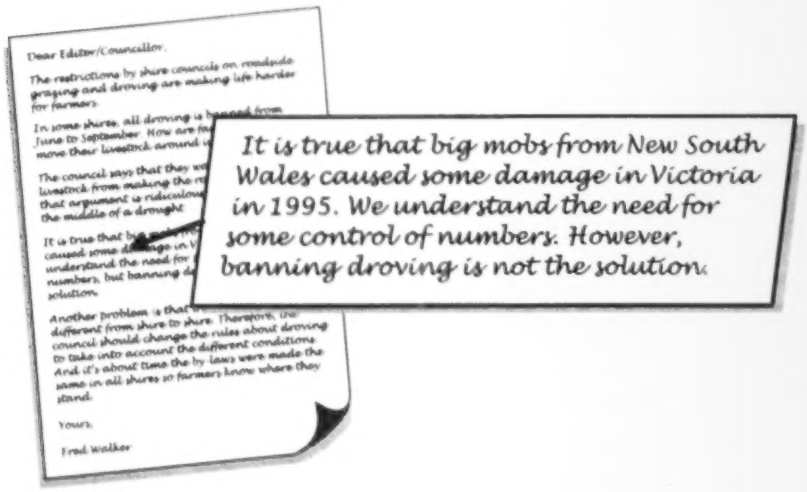

Dear Editor/Councillor,
The restrictions by shire councils on roadside grazing and droving are making life harder for farmers.
In some shires, all droving is banned from June to September. How are farmers supposed to move their livestock around in that time?
The council says that they want to stop the livestock from making the roadsides boggy. But that argument is ridiculous when we are in the middle of a drought.
It is true that big mobs from caused some damage in understand the need for numbers, but banning solution.
Another problem is that different from shire to council should change the rules to take into account the different conditions. And it's about time the by laws were made the same in all shires so farmers know where they stand.
Yours,
Fred Walker

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

In this part of the letter, Fred shows that he knows the council's point of view. He then explains why it is wrong. This is a good thing to do in a letter about an issue. It shows you know what other people think, and can answer them. We usually use the word "But" in this part of the letter:

Other people say... but...

Fred also says:


Dear Editor/Councillor,
The restrictions by shire councils on roadside grazing and droving are making life harder for farmers.
In some shires, all droving is banned from June to September. How are fa
move their livestock around
The council says that they wa
livestock from making the ro
that argument is ridiculous
the middle of a drought.
It is true that bi
caused some da
understand the need for
numbers, but banning d
solution.
Another problem is that
different from shire to shire. Therefore, the
council should change the rules about droving
to take into account the different conditions.
And it's about time the by laws were made the
same in all shires so farmers know where they
stand.
Yours,
Fred Walker
It is true that big mobs from New South Wales caused some damage in Victoria in 1995. We understand the need for some control of numbers. However, banning droving is not the solution.

This shows that Fred is a reasonable person who can see both sides. He agrees that droving sometimes causes problems but he disagrees with this way of solving them. This also makes the argument stronger. This time he uses the word "However" which means "but":

It is true that. . . However,. . .is not the solution.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Your solution to the problem

Finish off by saying what you think needs to happen. Again, keep it short and be specific. In this part of the letter we often use the word "should":

Therefore the council should change the rules about droving.

Therefore the government should immediately provide financial assistance to areas affected by drought.

The word "Therefore" means "for all the reasons I have said in this letter." It sums everything up. It's a good word to start the last sentence. "In conclusion" means roughly the same thing.

Other words you can use in the last sentence are:

It's about time . . .

It is necessary for . . .

It is essential that . . .

It is important that . . .

Activity 11

Here is another letter about an issue. This time the order is mixed up. Try to sort out the letter. Write the letter of each sentence next to the numbers at the bottom to show the order in which the sentences should appear. You may prefer to re-write the letter.

a) Now we are told the bank is going to close. A lot of people depend on the bank for financial services. Where are we supposed to go now?

b) We have already lost our primary school and our library and we have to drive 50 miles to the nearest hospital.

c) In conclusion, the bank should put people before profits and give us our local branch back.

d) Soon there will be no services left at all in Maryville.

e) The bank also provides jobs in a town where 25% of adults are unemployed.

f) The closure of the local branch of the bank is a great loss to our local community in Maryville.

g) It is true that the branch is small compared to city branches, but it is still very important to the community.

1___ 2___ 3___ 4___ 5___ 6___ 7___

A group of fruitgrowers have got together because they are angry. They want to protest about the government cutting tariffs on imported fruit. They decide to write to a popular country newspaper.

Remember how to approach a piece of writing:

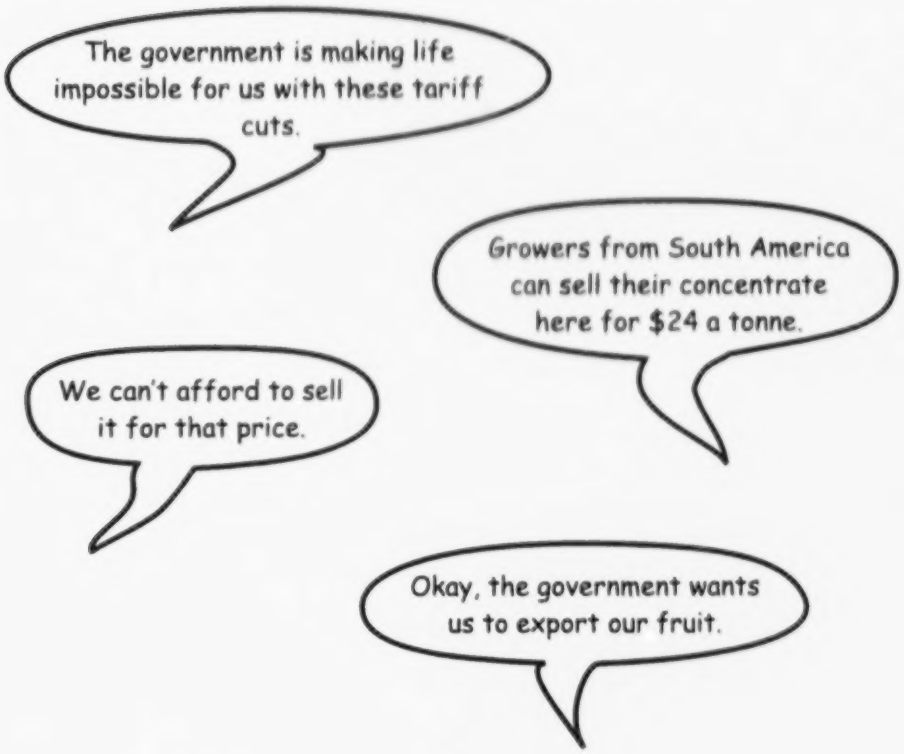
Writing skills: five stages of writing

1. Think and talk about what to write.
2. Make a plan.
3. Write a first draft.
4. Check and fix the draft.
5. Write a final version.

Let's look at this process step-by-step.

1. Think and talk about it

The fruitgrowers have these ideas about the letter.


The government is making life impossible for us with these tariff cuts.
Growers from South America can sell their concentrate here for $24 a tonne.
We can't afford to sell it for that price.
Okay, the government wants us to export our fruit.

Other countries like the USA and those in Europe have tariffs on imports.
So we can't sell overseas either!
We'll have to destroy our fruit.
The government should put tariffs back on imports.
Yes, like they did for the car industry!
And they should have quotas for how much can come in.
Then we'll be able to make a living.
And the industry will survive for the future.

2. Make a plan

Together, the fruitgrowers make a plan of the letter:

First, they say what the problem is.

Then, they give some examples.

Last, they say what they want to happen.

Example: plan of protest letter

1. Latest tariff cuts on imported fruit - life very difficult
2. Imported concentrate - $24 a tonne
USA and Europe - tariffs on imported fruit
Australian fruit growers have to destroy fruit
3. Put tariffs back on imported fruit
Have quotas of imported fruit
Industry will survive in the future

3. Write a draft

Now it is time to try writing a draft of the letter. The idea is to get everything down, without worrying too much about spelling at this stage. You will have time to fix up little things later.

Activity 12

Suppose you are one of the fruit growers. Using the plan, try writing a draft of the letter. Remember to use suitable words *like and, also, but, therefore* to link the parts together.

Then get someone to check it with you. These are the things you need to check:

- Have you put in everything you want to say?
- Are the points in the right order?
- Have you included the three parts: problem, details, solution?
- Have you linked the sentences together with words like also, in addition, another point is . . ., therefore?
- Is the spelling okay?
- Have you put capital letters and full stops in the right places?

Activity 13

1. In answer to the letter from the angry fruitgrowers about tariffs, another letter appears in the paper. The writer disagrees with the first letter and supports tariff cuts.

   Try to complete the letter by putting suitable words in each space. Choose from these words:

   Therefore *If* *but* *I would like* *should*

   It is true *I agree* *export* *However* *I think*

1 ..... to disagree with the views expressed by the fruitgrowers in their letter of 21/8/97. 2 ..... the policy of tariff cuts is the only way to go for Australia.

3 ..... that the policy is causing some hardship in the short-term. 4 ..... we have to think of the long-term future of our industry.

We are only a small nation with a population of 18 million. We have to 5 ..... to survive. 6 ..... we don't allow overseas growers to sell their goods in our markets, they will not let us export to their much larger markets.

7 ..... that some countries have higher tariffs than Australia. 8 ..... tariffs are being reduced in many countries, including the USA, Europe and Japan.

9 ..... Australian farmers 10 ..... accept that tariff cuts are here to stay, and get used to competing on the world market without government protection.

2. Choose an issue that you think is important and that is being reported and discussed in the newspapers. Write a letter about it that sets out your point of view.

Model answers

Activity 11

Here is one way of organising the letter. You may have written the middle section in a different order. That doesn't really matter as long as f) is first and c) is last.

The closure of the local branch of the bank is a great loss to our local community in Maryville.

We have already lost our primary school and our library and we have to drive 50 miles to the nearest hospital. Soon there will be no services left at all in Maryville.

Now we are told the bank is going to close. A lot of people depend on the bank for financial services. Where are we supposed to go now?

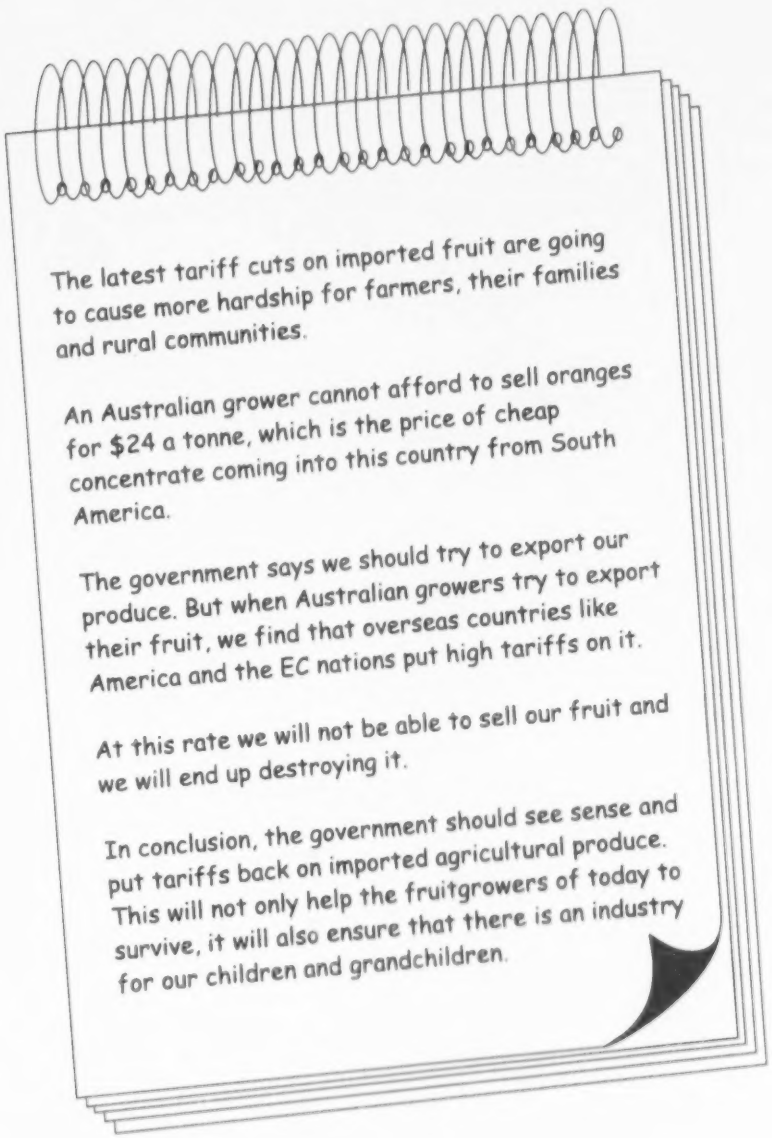
It is true that the branch is small compared to city branches, but it is still very important to the community.

The bank also provides jobs in a town where 25% of adults are unemployed.

In conclusion, the bank should put people before profits and give us our local branch back.

Activity 12

Your letter could be something like this:



The latest tariff cuts on imported fruit are going to cause more hardship for farmers, their families and rural communities.

An Australian grower cannot afford to sell oranges for $24 a tonne, which is the price of cheap concentrate coming into this country from South America.

The government says we should try to export our produce. But when Australian growers try to export their fruit, we find that overseas countries like America and the EC nations put high tariffs on it.

At this rate we will not be able to sell our fruit and we will end up destroying it.

In conclusion, the government should see sense and put tariffs back on imported agricultural produce. This will not only help the fruitgrowers of today to survive, it will also ensure that there is an industry for our children and grandchildren.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Activity 13

Note: *but* and *however* are both acceptable for 4 and 8.

I agree and *It is true* are both acceptable for 3 and 7.

I would like to disagree with the views expressed by the fruitgrowers in their letter of 21/8/97. *I think* the policy of tariff cuts is the only way to go for Australia.

I agree that the policy is causing some hardship in the short-term. *But* we have to think of the long-term future of our industry.

We are only a small nation with a population of 18 million. We have to *export* to survive. *If* we don't allow overseas growers to sell their goods in our markets, they will not let us export to their much larger markets.

It is true that some countries have higher tariffs than Australia. *However* tariffs are being reduced in many countries, including the USA, Europe and Japan.

Therefore Australian farmers *should* accept that tariff cuts are here to stay, and get used to competing on the world market without government protection.